

**THE RURAL VOTE AND THE RISE OF THE LABOUR  
PARTY, 1931–1935.**

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Stephen W. McLeod

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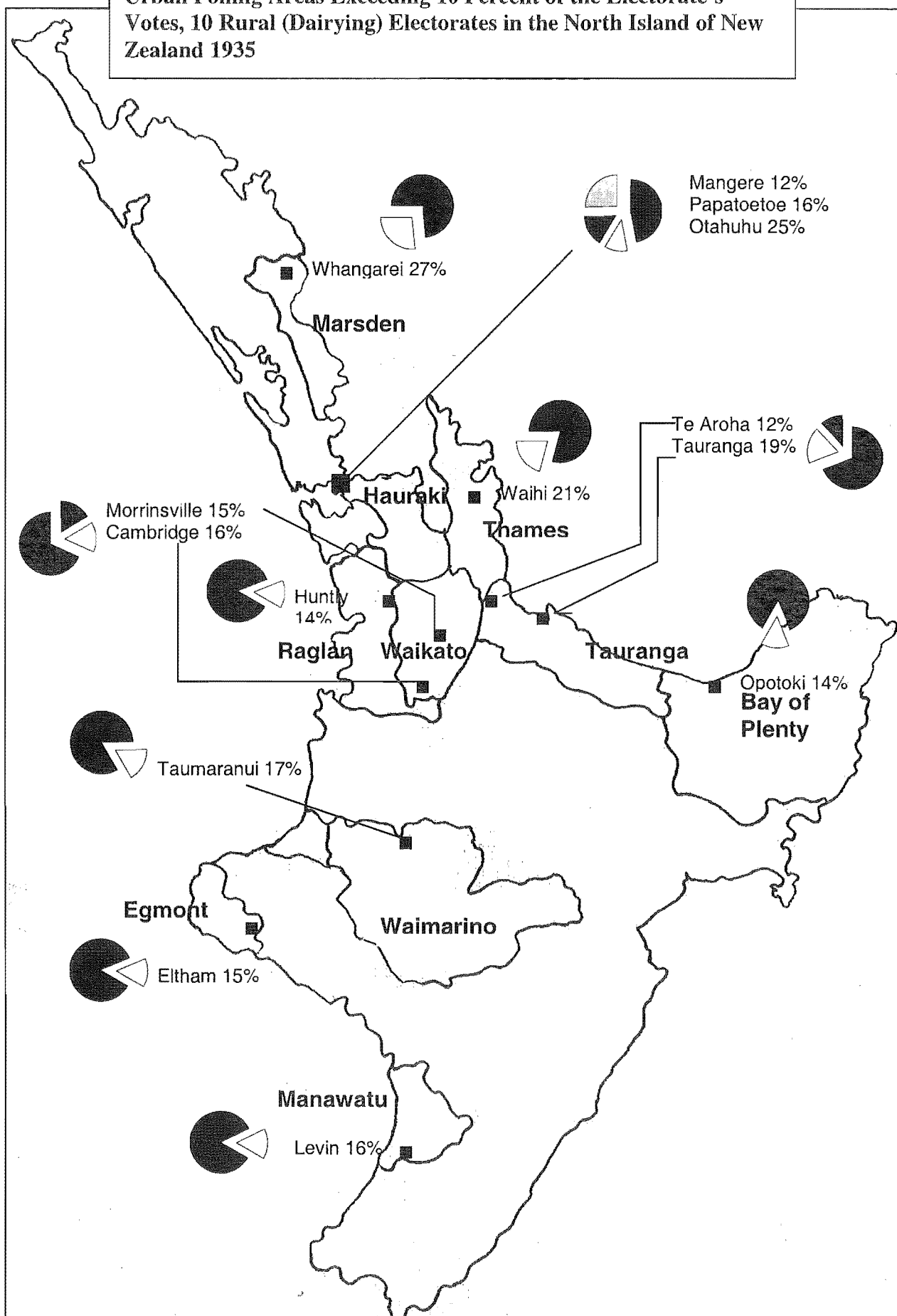
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## Abstract

The 1935 general election and the first Labour government have iconic status in New Zealand history. After a belated rise, Labour initiated a raft of social reforms—the birth of the welfare state—and remained in office 14 years, an exceptionally good record by any standards for a left-wing party. In a radical voting realignment a decisive number of formerly conservative-voting rural electorates became Labour's new allies and gave the party a handsome majority. Assuming that rural voters largely comprised farmers, historians speculated that the Great Depression (1929–34) was the catalyst for an alliance—unthinkable under ordinary circumstances—of farmers and urban manual workers. Initially impressionistic, the claims gained decisive support from two pioneering quantitative analyses in the late 1940s, and have remained an unchallenged convention in the historiography. This thesis tests the convention. It takes 10 farming electorates encompassing 505 polling places, and in each case correlates occupations and party votes. The database reveals surprising heterogeneity between and within rural electorates: in particular, the data featured higher numbers of urban manual and white-collar workers than previously has been believed. Other claims tested encompass farm worker and white-collar worker allegiance; minor party voting; voter turnout; and population changes. Besides refuting the major claim that farmers generally voted Labour in 1935, the data reveal that in fact there were fewer farmers than manual workers (not including farm workers) in most of the 10 rural electorates studied. Moreover, the data suggest that voter realignment—only ever conceived as a leftward shift by farmers—operated simultaneously in two directions; that is, some manuals voted conservative. Chosen for their typicality, the ten cases offer a verdict that is predicted to extrapolate to other rural electorates.

**Urban Polling Areas Exceeding 10 Percent of the Electorate's  
Votes, 10 Rural (Dairying) Electorates in the North Island of New  
Zealand 1935**



Note: These boundaries applied for the three elections of 1928, 1931, and 1935. Locations are approximate.

## Part I: Background

### Chapter 1: Introduction

‘The depression was the issue and the election was the civil war of the democracy’.<sup>1</sup> Keith Sinclair’s dictum captures the drama of New Zealand’s 1935 general election when the Labour party first came to power. In 1931, Labour had won just 24 seats, 17 short of a parliamentary majority; in four years the party more than doubled its seats to 53, giving it a comfortable majority in the House of Representatives.<sup>2</sup> In the seven years since the 1928 election, Labour almost doubled its vote share and almost trebled its MPs.<sup>3</sup> This ‘political upheaval’<sup>4</sup> was an outstanding result because the party’s rise had been slow compared with that of the political left in Australia and the United Kingdom.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Keith Sinclair, *Walter Nash*, (Auckland University Press, Auckland, 1977), p. 111.

<sup>2</sup> At this time, there were 80 seats in the House, 76 general and four Maori seats. In addition to its own 53 seats, Labour could count on the support of two Ratana party MPs and three Independent MPs.

<sup>3</sup> Note that share of electorates won and share of the vote gained were not the same thing under the prevailing electoral system known as FPP (First Past the Post).

<sup>4</sup> Leicester Webb, ‘Politics and Administration’, in *New Zealand*, H. Belshaw (ed.), (University of California Press, Berkeley, 1947), p. 269. Like many others, Webb saw similarities between Labour’s rise in 1935 and the Liberals’ rise in 1890.

<sup>5</sup> Miles Fairburn, ‘Why did the New Zealand Labour Party fail to win office until 1935?’ *Political Science*, Vol. XXXVII, No. 2 (December 1985), pp. 101–124.



On the face of it, the 1935 election seems to match the characteristics of a ‘critical election’, which V. O. Key characterized as

election[s] in which voters are...unusually deeply concerned, in which the extent of involvement is relatively quite high, and in which the decisive results of the voting reveal a sharp alteration of the pre-existing cleavage within the electorate...[that] seems to persist for several succeeding elections.<sup>6</sup>

New Zealand’s 1935 general election fulfilled Key’s conditions: voters were dismayed by the extent and effects of mass unemployment, and found too much to forgive the Coalition government for; electoral involvement was high because voter turnout reached record levels,<sup>7</sup> voting was decisive because the Labour party picked up 29 additional electorates, and the new government lasted four parliamentary terms. Key’s other characteristic—alteration to the pre-existing cleavage—also seemed to apply. A number of Labour’s new MPs in 1935 came from the party’s urban heartland, but surprisingly, 19 of the 29 new Labour MPs came from electorates with a majority of rural-dwelling electors. The result, declared Willis Airey, showed that ‘in depression the small working farmer is more worker than capitalist.’<sup>8</sup>

In New Zealand, the term ‘rural’ implies ‘farmers’, and has generally meant settlements of up to one thousand people or so. How historians have defined ‘rural’ is less important than what they seem to have regarded as an important characteristic of rural electorates: a preponderance of farmers. Historians’ assumptions about farmer numbers stemmed from a convenient proxy measure: percentage of the population deemed ‘rural’ by the Representation Commission. The Commission—a statutory body—distinguished between ‘rural’ and ‘urban’ dwellers in order to implement the country quota, a rural–urban distinction that was enshrined in legislation designed to promote the ‘rural’ component.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> V. O. Key Jr., ‘A Theory of Critical Elections’, *Journal of Politics*, Vol. 17, (1955), p. 4. Key’s context was the United States, but in the same period as this thesis. Following Key, Angus Campbell argued that the most dramatic voter realignment in the U.S. occurred in response to the Great Depression: A. Campbell, ‘A Classification of the Presidential Elections’, in *Elections and the Political Order*, Angus Campbell, Philip E. Converse, Warren E. Miller, (John Wiley, New York, 1966), pp. 74–76.

<sup>7</sup> In eight Labour-voting electorates in this study, voter turnout increased by a mean 10.3 percentage points over 1931.

<sup>8</sup> Willis T. G. Airey, ‘The Rise of the Labour Party’, in *Ends and Means in New Zealand Politics*, R. M. Chapman (ed.), (University of Auckland, Auckland, 1961), p. 40.

<sup>9</sup> The Commission designated ‘rural’ those living more than five miles from the Chief Post Office of one of the four main cities or outside boroughs of more than 2 000 people; all others were ‘urban’.

Over most of its life, this long-standing legislative requirement reduced by 28 percent the population—and hence the geographical size—of electorates, or parts of electorates, classified as ‘rural’. That is, rural areas had more electorates (and thus more MPs) per head of population than did urban areas. The legislative intent was thus ‘to increase the importance of farming opinion in the choice of governments.’<sup>10</sup> Although the Commission’s definition worked perfectly well for its intended purpose, historians have used it as a proxy measure for the occupational composition of rural electorates;<sup>11</sup> and in this way the quota became central to election analyses of the period.<sup>12</sup>

In political terms, then, ‘rural’ was synonymous with ‘farmer’. Farmers—as politicians, Cabinet Ministers, and Prime Ministers—had long dominated New Zealand’s political history. Without Labour’s newfound rural support in 1935—up from just three rural electorates in 1931—the party would have been stranded in the political wilderness seven seats shy of a parliamentary majority. Rural areas had shown Labour scant favour since the days of the Liberal ministry, but here was a mass conversion of electorates that, in the main, had never even been contested by the Labour party. Why then did rural electorates—or indeed, farmers—effectively put Labour into power in 1935?

An apparent leftward shift by farmers against the backdrop of the Great Depression (1929–34) proved a seductive causal combination for historians. A large corpus of historiography features the consensus that the Labour party won power when small farmers formed a voting ‘alliance’ with urban manual workers.<sup>13</sup> Some consider this alliance a rare yet recurring phenomenon in New Zealand politics. The same two voter sections had apparently united in 1890 when the Liberals rose to power following the ‘long depression’ of the 1880s. Conservative ministries were in power during both economic depressions, prompting analysts to claim that

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<sup>10</sup> R. M. Chapman, *The Political Scene*, (Heinemann, Auckland, 1969), pp. 66–68. Robert Chapman is the pre-eminent election analyst for this period.

<sup>11</sup> James Watson, ‘Rural Life’, in *The Future of the Past: Themes in New Zealand History*, Colin Davis and Peter Lineham (eds), (Department of History, Massey University, Palmerston North, 1991), p. 49, suggests that, to understand social composition, ‘rural’ is generally best regarded as being on a continuum with ‘urban’. Watson’s essay is a guide to New Zealand’s rural historiography.

<sup>12</sup> Two key works appeared in 1948: Leslie Lipson, *The Politics of Equality: New Zealand’s Adventures in Democracy*, (University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1948); and R. M. Chapman, ‘The Significance of the 1928 General Election: a study in certain trends in New Zealand politics during the nineteen-twenties’, MA thesis, University of Auckland, 1948. Both works are discussed in chapter 2. The country quota and the electoral quota are not the same thing: the electoral quota is the number of electors, with some variation possible, that each electorate must have. Appendix D consists of a table of electoral quotas and variations from 1881–1987.

<sup>13</sup> The term ‘alliance’ was popular among contemporaries and persisted into the 1980s. Other descriptions included ‘junction’, ‘harmony’, ‘combination’, ‘coalition’, and ‘compromise’. Because ‘alliance’ connotes an element of intent between the groups—untestable on available data—this writer prefers the neutral term ‘voting alignment’.

farmers moved towards the left after prolonged economic adversity, and returned to the conservative fold when conditions improved.<sup>14</sup>

Not only had the political left attracted farmers' votes. In 1935, almost all minor parties were assumed to have attracted conservative votes because they were, in the main, conservative protest parties: 'third parties, which in this period expressed dissidence and recruited protestants, were broadly similar in appeal to the parties from which they derived. Therefore they cut into their own side'.<sup>15</sup> In other words, votes that minor parties received, particularly from farmers, would have otherwise gone to Nationalist candidates (or to conservative Independents in electorates with no Nationalist contender).

These are bold claims that constitute orthodoxy. This thesis assesses the claims and their supporting evidence. Comprising three chapters, Part I: Background introduces the subject, analyses the historiography, and discusses the methodology used for the analysis. Central questions are: what were historians' sources and how reliable were they? Do electorate-level data offer adequate explanatory possibilities? Are additional data available but have not been used? In particular, what were the occupational profiles of typical rural electorates—farmers and farm workers feature in the historiography, but what of manuals (other than farm workers) and white-collar workers in rural areas? Understandably, historians have focused on the question of Labour voting by farmers; however, they have almost entirely overlooked a parallel question—conservative voting by traditional Labour supporters.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> The Coalition was the conservative government in power from 1931 to 1935, comprising MPs from both Reform and United parties. In 1935, their candidates campaigned as Nationalists (for National Political Federation), and have often been referred to as National candidates, although the National Party proper was not constituted until 1936.

<sup>15</sup> R. M. Chapman, 'The Response to Labour and the Question of Parallelism of Opinion', in *Studies of a Small Democracy: Essays in Honour of Willis Airey*, Robert M. Chapman and Keith Sinclair (eds), (Paul's Book Arcade, Auckland, 1963), p. 235. Exceptions in 1935 were Ratana and Socialist candidates.

<sup>16</sup> See, however, Miles Fairburn, 'Why Did the New Zealand Labour Party Fail to Win Office?' pp. 104–105; Miles Fairburn and Stephen Haslett, 'The Rise of the Left and Working-Class Voting Behaviour in New Zealand: New Methods', *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, Vol. XXXV, 4 (Spring, 2005), pp. 523–555. Robert S. Milne, *Political Parties in New Zealand*, (Clarendon Press, Oxford, London, 1966), p. 87, estimated that perhaps 20 percent of manual workers voted for the conservatives.

From today's perspective, it might appear strange that a long-standing cleavage between farmer and blue-collar—indeed, as Erik Olssen suggested, between rural and urban—could be so speedily dismantled in 1935.<sup>17</sup> Chapter 2 delineates claims, sources and evidence in the historiography, with particular attention paid to the chronology of the analyses and the structure of the arguments. Because this investigation uses quantitative evidence, vague claims create particular problems. Take, for example, J. B. Condliffe's claim that the Labour party '[won] the support of the small farmers'.<sup>18</sup> Did Condliffe mean that a majority of small farmers voted for Labour? Alternatively, did he mean that sufficient small farmers voted alongside traditional Labour supporters to tip the balance in rural electorates? This thesis tests both interpretations: the former, as the 'strong farmer' hypothesis; the latter, as the 'weak farmer' hypothesis. In addition to the central claim concerning farmers' allegiance, the data analysis tests other claims concerning farm workers, white-collar workers, minor party votes, and population changes.

Chapter 3: Methodology encompasses data protocols, primary sources, statistical methods used in the analysis, and the rationale behind the selection of the test cases. The 10 test cases, drawn from a pool of 39 electorates that had a majority of 'rural' over 'urban' voters, represent the most typical farmer electorates.<sup>19</sup>

Part II: Test Cases begins with an introductory section to outline the general format of the data analysis, although some test cases had their own peculiar circumstances that warranted individual treatment. Tables and graphs—indispensable to interpretation—are included in the text, leaving some technical matters and data summaries to the appendices. The introductory section includes two matters of general relevance: one is a supposed link between voter turnout and voting for the Labour party; the second concerns Robert Chapman's highly influential electorate typology. The analysis reveals just a tenuous link between the Representation Commission's definition of 'rural' and the way that historians have applied it.

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<sup>17</sup> J. H. Nagel, 'Voter turnout in New Zealand general elections, 1928-1988', *Political Science*, Vol. 40, No. 2 (1988), p. 33, suggested that voting alignments were 'Historically organized primarily along class lines'. According to Erik Olssen, 'The 'Working Class' in New Zealand', *New Zealand Journal of History*, Vol. 8, No. 1 (1974), p. 60, class was of 'lesser importance than sectional conflict between towns and countryside'.

<sup>18</sup> J. B. Condliffe, *New Zealand in the Making: A Study of Economic and Social Development*, (George Allen and Unwin, London, 1936), 2nd rev. ed., 1959, p. 50.

<sup>19</sup> The 80 electorates included 39 with a majority of rural over urban voters. The test cases were drawn only from European electorates because Maori electorates divided New Zealand into four vast areas that overlapped with European electorates. Maori electorates did not distinguish between rural or urban voters, nor were there any formal Maori electoral rolls in this period; in fact, there were no known official maps of Maori electorates prior to 1977, although they had been defined in the *New Zealand Gazette* as early as 1919: Alan D. McRobie, *New Zealand Electoral Atlas*, (GP Books, Wellington, 1989), p. 148.

The main body of part II consists of 10 chapters, one for each case study. The data encompass 505 polling places measured on two scales: the percentage of each of four occupational categories of voters on the 1935 electoral roll;<sup>20</sup> and the percentage of votes for each candidate in the 1935 general election.<sup>21</sup> The two measures for each polling place were then correlated to reveal the extent to which changes on one scale were associated with changes on the other scale. The claim—in either the strong or weak form—that farmers voted Labour implies that increases in the proportions of farmers at polling place level would see a corresponding increase in the proportions of Labour votes. It would be contradictory to assert that farmers voted Labour if the Labour vote tended to *fall* as proportions of farmers increased.

The four occupational categories of male electors<sup>22</sup> used in this thesis—farmers, farm workers, manuals, and white-collars—were mandated by claims in the literature, and are not intended to be indicators of social class. In this respect, this thesis differs from most electoral studies in this country.<sup>23</sup> Ironically, the lack of a national five-yearly census in 1931 proved helpful, since electoral boundaries—not redrawn in 1932 as would have otherwise been the case—remained static for the three elections of 1928, 1931, and 1935, making it easier to compare electorates during the social flux of the depression.<sup>24</sup>

Part III: Further Explorations augments the main thrust of the thesis—the horizontal survey of 10 electorates in 1935—by incorporating data from the 1938 electoral roll of one of the cases. The extension arose out of questions concerning the typicality of 1935 data: were 1935 occupational profiles an aberration caused by the depression or did these profiles reveal long-term patterns. Moreover, 1938 saw some rural electorates drift back to the conservatives—was there a partial realignment of voter sections (as suggested by some analysts), or was it due to changes in the voter sections themselves—that is, changes in proportions of the occupations that comprise the voter sections? The data analysis tested preliminary conclusions from the 1935 rolls

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<sup>20</sup> Electoral rolls were considered the most reliable source of occupational data for reasons set out in the methodology. Wise's *New Zealand Post Office Directory* is another source of occupational data but lists only heads of households and does not cover rural areas outside small towns.

<sup>21</sup> The official results list only a candidate's surname; party affiliation can be found in newspapers; in this case, the *Christchurch Press*, 28 November 1935.

<sup>22</sup> This thesis does not cover the female vote—electoral rolls listed females by marital status not occupation—but Chapter 3 argues that overall findings are not weakened in consequence.

<sup>23</sup> A prominent political scientist has claimed that most New Zealand research on the relationship between social groups and electoral choice has focused on social class: Jack Vowles, 'Social Groups and Electoral Behaviour', in Martin Holland (ed.), *Electoral Behaviour in New Zealand*, (Oxford University Press, Auckland, 1992), p. 97.

<sup>24</sup> As a cost-saving measure during the depression, the normal five-yearly census due in 1931 was omitted. The electoral rolls, on the other hand, were updated for each election.

regarding changes in electorate occupational profiles. Part III proved useful in refining suggestions for further research.

Part IV—Conclusion contains the overall thesis conclusion and appendices that cover technical and secondary issues. The conclusion suggests a new model of rural electorate voting that embodies an alternative explanation for the 1935 election result. The idea that the depression precipitated a wholesale and humanitarian shift towards the political left by farmers gives way to a far simpler explanation. There are three strands to this argument: the first dismisses farmers as a major source of Labour votes in 1935. The data prove surprisingly consistent, and suggest that the effects of the slump on voting allegiances have been overrated.

The second strand of the argument is that occupational profiles of rural electorates resist uncritical generalisation. Rural electorates of the day were not fully stocked with farmers and relatively homogenous.<sup>25</sup> Not only did manual workers—generally speaking, Labour supporters in 1935—feature in rural areas, but also numbers of manuals increased disproportionately relative to other categories during the depression. In fact, the test cases reveal many differences, whether variations in cross-party voting, variations in occupational structure, or, as we shall see, variations in population distribution. Moreover, differences existed not just between electorates but also within electorates: particular occupational categories in different areas of an electorate were not necessarily aligned in their party preference.

The third strand argues for unnoticed cross-party voting in 1935. Not only has farmer support for the Labour party been exaggerated, but also rural manual workers appear to have been a source of conservative votes, despite the Coalition government's handling of the depression. Because manuals were a feature of rural electorates before 1935, and the Labour party generally performed more poorly than would have been indicated by numbers of aligned voters, the implication is that many rural manuals had a long-standing tendency to vote conservative. Overall, this thesis argues that New Zealand's general election in 1935 was not the 'critical' election that it might have seemed: a key ingredient—the voting 'alliance' of farmers and urban manual workers—does not feature in the data of 10 key rural electorates.

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<sup>25</sup> Historians who have differed from the orthodox view include Milne, *Political Parties*, pp. 84, 88–89; and Watson, 'Rural Life', pp. 49–75.

## Chapter 2: Historiography

### *Introduction*

Consensus characterises the historiography of Labour's general election win in 1935. Leading contemporary historians' interpretations of the election result were reinforced by quantitative analysis in the late 1940s. General and regional histories and a number of theses throughout the 1950s restated the orthodoxy that Labour won office because of a voting alignment—usually described as an 'alliance'—between small farmers and blue-collar workers. White-collar workers and farm workers also supported Labour, and the minor party vote came at Nationalists' expense, thereby gifting Labour many extra MPs. A lone thesis from the late 1950s questioned the central pillars of the consensus, and some of the supporting arguments have been critically examined in later times, but the consensus has remained intact to the present day.

Inclusion of farmers was a radical element in the consensus, because farmers' interests had long been seen as diametrically opposed to those of blue-collar workers. In 1935, however, farmers played a major, if not pivotal role, in the result. Farmers achieved decisive political power through the developing dairy industry, which swelled small farmer numbers to the point where they were the second largest occupational category. Cleavage between farmers and blue-collar workers has been an important theme in New Zealand writing, with urban and rural interests seen to be in conflict.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Peter Aimer and Ian McAllister, 'Electoral Behaviour: Progress, Problems, and Prospects', in *Electoral Behaviour in New Zealand*, Martin Holland (ed.), (Oxford University Press, Auckland, 1992), p. 175, assert that 'the main lines of division...run between country and city, and between richer and poorer suburbs'. The town-country cleavage is essentially the primary-secondary economy cleavage: R. J. Johnston, 'Electoral Geography', in Holland (ed.), pp. 25–26. For another perspective on occupations and voting, see Alan D. Robinson, 'Class Voting in New Zealand: A Comment on Alford's Comparison of Class Voting in the Anglo-American Political Systems', in *Party Systems and Voter Alignments: Cross-National Perspectives*, Seymour Lipset and Stein Rokkan (eds), (The Free Press, New York, 1967), Vol. 7, pp. 96–110. Cora Vellecoop stressed that 'Labour voters are predominant among the lower occupational groups, National among the higher strata': Cora Vellecoop, 'Social Strata in New Zealand', in *Social Process in New Zealand: Readings in Sociology*, John Forster (ed.), (Longman Paul, Auckland, 1969), pp. 255–256.

Friction between the two was more pronounced in hard times,<sup>27</sup> and so deeply entrenched was this ‘rural bias, this ideology’, that it would have been heretical to challenge it.<sup>28</sup> Nevertheless, economic depression, not once but twice, disrupted the cleavage: in 1890, following the so-called Long Depression, an alliance of small farmers and urban manual workers was instrumental in the election of the Liberal–Labour government; in 1935, following the so-called Great Depression, the alliance—now, a ‘Liberal alliance’—was reformed and elected the first Labour government.

This chapter continues with a four-part section that traces the early development of these explanations (‘Consensus established’), and goes on to show how quantitative analysis buttressed the orthodoxy (‘Consensus elaborated’). An account of subsequent progress of the orthodoxy (‘Consensus restated’), leads into ‘Consensus questioned’. The chapter concludes by listing historiographical claims that are testable using quantitative data.

### *Consensus established*

The economic historian, J. B. Condliffe, initially articulated important features of the consensus. In particular, Condliffe established the importance of small farmers—in particular dairy farmers—in New Zealand’s electoral historiography. In 1925, Condliffe linked small farmers to the rise of the Reform party. He noted that Crown leaseholders had shifted their allegiance away from the Liberal–Labour party, and declared that ‘The small farmers of the dairying districts of the North Island became the dominant force in New Zealand politics and a change of government [to Reform] was inevitable.’<sup>29</sup> Focusing on North Island dairy farmers, Condliffe later claimed that small farmer domination applied from as early as 1912, developed through the 1920s, and continued into the 1930s.<sup>30</sup> By 1929 farmers’ hegemony was such that their votes were a pre-requisite for an election victory: ‘Labour...was not able to get convincing support from the small farmers

<sup>27</sup> R. M. Chapman and Edmond P. Malone, *New Zealand in the Twenties: Social Change and Material Progress*, (Heinemann, Auckland, 1969), p. 32.

<sup>28</sup> B. D. Graham, ‘The Country Party Idea in New Zealand Politics, 1901–1935’, in *Studies of a Small Democracy: Essays in Honour of Willis Airey*, R. M. Chapman and Keith Sinclair (eds), (Paul’s Book Arcade, Auckland, 1963). Tony Simpson called the basis for rural opposition to the Labour party ‘rural mythologies’: Simpson, *A vision betrayed: the decline of democracy in New Zealand*, (Hodder and Stoughton, Auckland, 1984), p. 163.

<sup>29</sup> J. B. Condliffe, *A Short History of New Zealand*, (M. Isitt, Christchurch, 1925), p. 190.

<sup>30</sup> J. B. Condliffe, *The Welfare State in New Zealand*, (George Allen and Unwin, London, 1959), p. 19.



who alone could place it in power.<sup>31</sup> In 1936, Condliffe made two memorable declarations. The first concerned the plight of farmers, who were subject to ‘widespread foreclosures of mortgages’ because they defaulted on interest payments.<sup>32</sup> The second declaration reinforced the political profile of dairy farmers, who ‘By 1935, with the exception of the various types of civil servant...were the biggest occupational group in the Dominion.’<sup>33</sup> Just as in 1890, however, electoral change would depend on two factors: an economic depression and a voting combination of small farmers and town workers. ‘Unless adverse economic circumstance should again unite the small farmers and town workers’, Condliffe cautioned, ‘it is probable that the experimental period [of the 1890s] will prove to be a closed chapter in New Zealand history.’<sup>34</sup>

Condliffe consistently used the terms ‘small farmer’ and, occasionally, ‘dairy farmer’. He might well have simply used the generic ‘farmer’, because most farmers were dairy farmers.<sup>35</sup> Dairy farmers were small farmers by definition, because dairy farms of the time were smallholdings operated by the owner and family

<sup>31</sup> J. B. Condliffe, ‘Economic Development’, in *The Cambridge History of the British Empire*, J. H. Rose, A. P. Newton, and E. A. Benians (eds), (Cambridge University Press, London, 1933), Vol. 7, Pt 2, p. 192 (written in 1929). Condliffe can only have meant that the small farmer vote was a *necessary* condition for a Labour win—it could not have been a *sufficient* condition—in light of his parallel claim that both small farmers and town workers were vital to Labour.

<sup>32</sup> A claim that would be challenged by Brian Bellringer in 1958 (see below), and by others subsequently, but one that has made a strong impression on the popular mind. Although neither Lipson nor Chapman appear to have repeated the claim, it resurfaced in the 1950s: see Harold G. Miller, *New Zealand*, (Hutchinson, London, 1950), p. 125. The claim appeared again in 1989, as ‘half the nation’s farmers were bankrupt: Laurie Barber, *New Zealand: A Short History*, (Century Hutchinson, Auckland, 1989), p. 128. The belief is important as it underpins Labour’s alleged appeal for farmers.

<sup>33</sup> J. B. Condliffe, *New Zealand in the Making: A Study of Economic and Social Development*, (George Allen and Unwin, London, 1936), 2nd rev. ed. (1959), p. 47 for mortgage defaults and p. 243 for dairy farmers’ profile. See also pp. 234–243 for Condliffe’s data concerning the preponderance of North Island development between 1890 and 1935.

<sup>34</sup> J. B. Condliffe, ‘Political Parties and State Experiments, 1876–1921’, in *The Cambridge History of the British Empire*, J. H. Newton, A. P. Rose, and E. A. Benians (eds), (Cambridge University Press, London, 1933), p. 180.

<sup>35</sup> The 1936 Census, Vol. X, p. 4, lists 71 480 male dairy farmers, against 33 645 sheep farmers and 15 963 mixed farmers; and 61 319 dairy farmers (males and females) in the North Island out of a national total of 75 009. Some 39 127, or approximately two-thirds, of the North Island were in Auckland provincial district. Thus, the terms ‘farmer’, ‘small farmer’ and ‘dairy farmer’ are synonymous for the purposes of this thesis. Except for direct quotes, the generic term ‘farmer’ will be used. In any case, ‘farmer’ was the occupational description used in the vast majority of cases in the electoral rolls, regardless of the fact that most farmers were dairy farmers.

without hired employees in most cases.<sup>36</sup>

Over time, Condliffe developed his explanatory sketch of the 1935 election result. In 1959, he could look back with approval at his earlier prediction: 'Not until ruinous depression in the 1930s reproduced and even exaggerated the conditions that had been prevalent in the 1880's [sic] was the alliance [of farmers and town workers] restored.'<sup>37</sup> Turning to the election campaign, Condliffe stressed the importance of Labour's manifesto in attracting farmers: 'In the election of 1935, Labour repeated the achievement of the Liberal-Labour Party by winning the support of the small farmers, largely by the promise of guaranteed export prices.'<sup>38</sup> As well as farmers and manuals, Condliffe identified other sources of Labour votes: 'Some of [the Labour party's] votes came also from lower income groups both in town and country—shopkeepers, civil servants, professional people, pensioners, unemployed, office workers and farm labourers.'<sup>39</sup>

Another contemporary, W. P. Morrell, in this case writing prior to the election, also contended that Labour's manifesto might catch the fancy of small farmers, but he specified 'hard-pressed' ones.<sup>40</sup> Drawing a distinction between richer and poorer farmers would become a feature of the historiography, as indicated below, but none of the theory's proponents has suggested how the claim might be tested.

<sup>36</sup> Paid employment—generally seasonal and temporary—was provided on only a small percentage of dairy farms: W. T. Doig, *A Survey of Standards of Life of New Zealand Dairy Farmers*, (Department of Scientific and Industrial Research, Wellington, 1940), p. 20, stressed the family nature of dairying. Doig cited a survey of 451 farms where it was found that permanent hired labour was employed in just 18 percent of cases; hired casual labour was found in just 5 percent of cases (p. 50). Two-thirds of farmers were farm owners (p. 24). In 1930, by another contemporary account, there were only 33 000 farm employees against 105 000 'occupiers and members of their families engaged in farm work' across the whole farming sector: W. P. Morrell, 'New Zealand', in *The Modern World: A Survey of Historical Forces*, H.A.L. Fisher (ed.), (Ernest Benn, London, 1935), p. 118. Horace Belshaw, a leading economist and, later, a member of the steering committee of the New Zealand Institute of Economic Research, notes family-based labour requirements: H. Belshaw, 'Agricultural Labour in New Zealand', in Belshaw *et al* (eds), *Agricultural Organization in New Zealand: A Survey of Land Utilization, Farm Organization, Finance and Marketing*, (Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, 1936), pp. 195–196. For average farm areas in eight typical dairying counties in 1934, see E. J. Fawcett, 'Dairy Farming', in H. Belshaw *et al* (eds), *Agricultural Organization*, p. 448.

<sup>37</sup> Condliffe, *New Zealand in the Making*, p. 225. The point of the term 'town worker' is to highlight blue-collar, urbanised workers, who were often trade union members. Henceforth, except for direct quotes, this thesis refers to 'manuals' instead of 'town workers', and will suggest that numbers of manuals in rural electorates have been widely underestimated. Occupational definitions are discussed in detail in the Methodology chapter of this thesis.

<sup>38</sup> Condliffe, *New Zealand in the Making*, p. 50.

<sup>39</sup> Condliffe, *Welfare State*, p. 58. This cross-section of Labour supporters previously appeared in Leslie Lipson's *The Politics of Equality: New Zealand's Adventures in Democracy*, (University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1948), p. 231.

<sup>40</sup> Morrell, 'New Zealand', p. 231.

In 1936, J. C. Beaglehole acknowledged that Labour had succeeded in becoming the first non-minority Labour government in the world,<sup>41</sup> and judged the election result to be a Coalition defeat rather than a Labour victory because, despite winning a majority of seats in the House, Labour did not win a majority of the vote. The Coalition government's problems had been all too apparent at election time: unemployment was still rife, the Democrats had split the conservative vote, the Coalition had no effective leadership, and Finance Minister Gordon Coates had been unpopular for some time, perceived as a meddlesome ally of the banks.

Moreover, the Douglas Social Credit movement<sup>42</sup> had paved the way for Labour— 'decisive help' from 'currency reformers'—by popularising monetary reform concepts.<sup>43</sup> Beaglehole also saw a parallel between the elections of 1890 and 1935, positing help for Labour from the 'Liberal tradition', which he defined as 'amelioration of the lot of the common man without fatal harm to the interests of his masters'.<sup>44</sup> Beaglehole did not elaborate on groups of voters responsible for Labour's success, or on his claim regarding the 'Liberal tradition'.

Willis Airey, another prominent contemporary, also noted a link between the elections of 1890 and 1935. Airey reiterated all three of Condcliffe's essential elements: depression, the small farmer / blue-collar worker alliance, and Labour's manifesto. The alliance, he said, of 'the worker and the small man on the land...partially reknit in the depression...contributed to the return of the Labor [sic] government in 1935'.<sup>45</sup> The depression had '[fallen] most heavily on the small farmer', whose vote, consequently, was 'an appreciable factor' in the election. Moreover, Labour's policies appealed to farmers because of their similarity to Douglas Credit proposals.<sup>46</sup> On the Marxist terms of Airey, farmers' change of allegiance was really a change of heart: 'in depression the small working farmer is more worker than capitalist'.<sup>47</sup>

<sup>41</sup> However, Miles Fairburn, 'Why Did the New Zealand Labour Party Fail to Win Office until 1935?', p. 104, makes the point that the Australian Labor party had previously formed majority governments over two successive terms.

<sup>42</sup> The name is generally abbreviated to 'Douglas Credit' relating to the 1930s, and 'Social Credit' relating to the 1950s, when it emerged as a political party called the Social Credit Political League.

<sup>43</sup> The DSC factor appears to have been first noted by Beaglehole; but even though it became part of the canon, Condcliffe does not appear to have referred to it in his subsequent writings.

<sup>44</sup> J. C. Beaglehole, *A Short History*, (George Allen and Unwin, London, 1936), pp. 124–126.

<sup>45</sup> W. T. G. Airey, 'New Zealand In Evolution (1880–1947)', in *New Zealand*, H. Belshaw (ed.), (University of California Press, Berkeley 1947), p. 90.

<sup>46</sup> Airey, 'In Evolution', pp. 98–99.

<sup>47</sup> W. T. G. Airey, 'The Rise of the Labour Party', in *Ends and Means in New Zealand Politics*, R. M. Chapman (ed.), (University of Auckland, Auckland, 1961), p. 35.

*Consensus elaborated*

Two fine-grained analyses appeared in 1948: the first, Lipson's wide-ranging *Politics of Equality*; the second, Robert Chapman's narrowly focused thesis that set the scene for a new quantitative turn in election studies.<sup>48</sup> Lipson developed a five-part typology for electorates: 'entirely urban', 'mainly urban', 'mixed', 'mainly rural' and 'entirely rural'. Although the typology clearly constituted a major advance, Lipson drew too long a bow in claiming that it 'served to group the constituencies into an intelligible economic pattern.'<sup>49</sup> Lipson also noted an 'alliance' between the industrial workers and the small farmers that, in a repetition of 1890, had arisen out of depression.<sup>50</sup> Although others had propounded the idea of a 'Liberal tradition' in terms of voter sections, Lipson appears to be the first to claim a close similarity between areas that voted Labour and those that had voted Liberal in 1890.<sup>51</sup> Both parties, according to Lipson, had dominated city electorates and matched their opposition in rural areas.<sup>52</sup>

The 'Liberal tradition' concept forms the basis of Lipson's central claim: 'Here...is the conditioning basis of New Zealand politics and the clue to understanding its party history. There exists a solid central bloc of voters [who] swing leftward only if times remain continuously bad and will gravitate back to conservatism with prosperity.' Lipson stressed that the bloc was not a 'proletariat' but a 'lesser bourgeoisie', comprising 'industrial workers, small shopkeepers, the lower paid of the civil servants and schoolteachers, the small farmers, and farm laborers [sic]...[who] form the essence of New Zealand'. What drove these voters, he theorised, was the paramount need for security.<sup>53</sup>

Lipson highlighted Labour's minority vote in 22 electorates, and asserted that Democrats had split the conservative vote to Labour's advantage in 15 of the 22 cases, although he did not identify electorates concerned. At the same time, Lipson claimed that Labour 'captured many of the rural protest-votes.'<sup>54</sup> The

<sup>48</sup> R. M. Chapman, 'The Significance of the 1928 General Election: a study in certain trends in New Zealand politics during the nineteen-twenties', MA thesis, University of Auckland, 1948. This thesis was supervised by Willis Airey.

<sup>49</sup> Lipson, *Politics*, p. 202. Rural electorates were far too diverse for such a simplification to be useful. For Lipson's definition of electorates, see pp. 176–177. Lipson deals only with the 76 non-Maori electorates.

<sup>50</sup> Lipson, *Politics*, pp. 230–233.

<sup>51</sup> Lipson, *Politics*, p. 233. Lipson specified 1938.

<sup>52</sup> Lipson, *Politics*, p. 230. This appears to conflict with his statement that Labour took one-third of rural votes.

<sup>53</sup> Lipson, *Politics*, pp. 233–234. Lipson has identified a *mentalité* that will resurface in the conclusion to this thesis.

<sup>54</sup> Lipson, *Politics*, pp. 230–231.

two claims appear to contradict each other. Although unable to test for voters' motivation, this thesis analyses the minority vote in seven rural electorates.<sup>55</sup>

In 1938, Labour's farming vote increased by 10 percent, according to Lipson, maintaining Labour's outright majority in parliament. This was Labour's apogee, but the party's rural converts had already started to drift back to the conservative camp.<sup>56</sup> One of the case studies in this thesis analyses electoral rolls and election results from the 1938 election. The Waikato electorate voted Labour for the first time in 1935, but promptly and comprehensively returned to the conservatives in 1938. The other case—the Egmont electorate—was exceptional: a small farmer constituency that had resisted the swing to Labour in 1935.

Lipson also made a passing reference to Opposition concerns that an influx of public works employees in rural areas would swell the vote for the Labour party. Effects would be mitigated, Lipson seems to be saying, because these potential voters would need to be in the electorate six months before the election.<sup>57</sup> Firstly, Lipson does not seem to have considered how the depression years might have influenced the 1935 election; secondly, he did not reference his claim for a six-month residence qualification, and the claim appears incorrect in any case. The Electoral Act (1927) required adults to apply for enrolment after one month's residence in their new electorate.<sup>58</sup>

Lipson's typology may have been an advance over previous approaches but it contained a major inferential error. An otherwise excellent discussion of the country quota repeatedly conflated the terms 'rural' and 'farmer'. For example, Lipson states: 'by the addition of a fictitious 28 percent to the actual rural population, some parliamentary seats...were transferred to the farmers.'<sup>59</sup> By this, it is clear that Lipson believed (or simply assumed) that farmers were the predominant occupational group in electorates that had high proportions of their population classified as rural dwellers—hence his expression 'purely farming constituencies'.<sup>60</sup> The problem is that the Representation Commission made its assessments according to

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<sup>55</sup> Of the 10 test cases, one was a two-cornered contest, and two other electorates featured a minor party vote that was smaller than Labour's winning margin.

<sup>56</sup> Lipson, p. 233. This claim became orthodoxy.

<sup>57</sup> Lipson, *Politics*, p. 331.

<sup>58</sup> Alan D. McRobie, 'Elections and the Electoral System', in *New Zealand Government and Politics*, Raymond Miller (ed.), (Oxford University Press, Auckland, 2001), p. 190.

<sup>59</sup> Lipson, *Politics*, p. 177. The country quota analysis is at pp. 174–185.

<sup>60</sup> Lipson, *Politics*, p. 235.

where people lived, not according to how they made their living. An actual count of 'farmer' entries in the electoral rolls proves the assumption incorrect. The conflation of 'rural' and 'farmer' is a major theoretical issue.

As noted above, the second major work in 1948 was Robert Chapman's thesis, a watershed in New Zealand psephology. In a series of publications, in particular, a long-term analysis of voting trends,<sup>61</sup> Chapman influenced the direction of electoral research.<sup>62</sup> Following his more sophisticated analysis, Chapman concurred with orthodox explanations for the 1935 election result. Farmers—he specified North Island farmers—had 'swung solidly to Labour'<sup>63</sup> in a 'temporary junction of town worker and farmer in 1935.'<sup>64</sup> An 'exceptionally rapid...alteration of attitude'<sup>65</sup> in the countryside marked what Chapman would later describe as Coalition voters' 'headlong flight from the unfortunate.'<sup>66</sup>

Chapman also devised a typology for the 76 non-Maori electorates based on the Representation Commission's rural–urban definition.<sup>67</sup> Chapman's six categories of European seats were 'city', 'town', 'balanced', 'country-town', 'rural', and 'special country'. Country-town electorates, Chapman emphasised, featured farmers as usually two in every three of the population.<sup>68</sup> Chapman also highlighted 'special country' electorates because of their 'particular occupational and boundary peculiarities' that saw 'a large number of

<sup>61</sup> R. M. Chapman, 'The Response to Labour and the Question of Parallelism of Opinion', in *Studies of a Small Democracy: Essays in Honour of Willis Airey*, R. M. Chapman and Keith Sinclair (eds), (Paul's Book Arcade, Auckland, 1963).

<sup>62</sup> Works directly influenced by Chapman include Richard G. Habershon's 'A Study in Politics, 1928-1931', MA thesis, University of Auckland, 1958, which used Chapman's five-point typology for European electorates. Habershon's thesis was supervised by Airey. Bruce D. Graham's 'Waikato Politics', MA thesis, University of Auckland, 1954, used Chapman's polling place classification. Also supervised by Airey (and Chapman) was Richard Newman's 'New Zealand's Vote for Prohibition in 1911', *NZJH*, Vol. 9, No. 1 (1975), p. 67, footnote 35, used a modified version of Chapman's schema, dividing 'country electorates' into two groups according to the proportion of the population who lived in towns or townships larger than 500 people, and a third group—'special country'—which had 'substantial communities of miners and timber workers.'

<sup>63</sup> Chapman, 'Significance', p. 157.

<sup>64</sup> Chapman, 'Significance', p. 170.

<sup>65</sup> Chapman, 'Significance', p. 247

<sup>66</sup> R. M. Chapman, 'The Response to Labour and the Question of Parallelism of Opinion', in *Studies of a Small Democracy: Essays in Honour of Willis Airey*, R. M. Chapman and Keith Sinclair (eds), (Pauls' Book Arcade, Auckland, 1963), p. 232.

<sup>67</sup> The typology is detailed in 'Response', pp. 226–227, and endnote 3, p. 278.

<sup>68</sup> Chapman, 'Significance', p. 147, footnote.

manual labourers in a special occupation...combined with some proportion of farmers... [such that the] seat became sooner or later a Labour preserve.'<sup>69</sup>

It is important to note that Chapman used only electorate-level data (total number of voters) of his 'special country' electorates, not actual counts of manual workers or farmers.<sup>70</sup> Chapman subsequently refined his typology by the addition of a 'farmer' category, to take account of 'electorates with a clear majority of the population living on farms.'<sup>71</sup> Chapman would later refer to 17 seats 'dominated by farmers' although he did not specify which electorates he had in mind.<sup>72</sup>

Chapman probed beneath electorate-level data to individual polling places. He analysed urban areas by correlating two scales—an index of status and possessions, and Labour vote percentage.<sup>73</sup> He sought, above all, 'the molecule of electoral action, the voting at each polling booth', because 'booths draw on small districts...and the character of those districts can be well defined accordingly.'<sup>74</sup> Chapman writes: 'Maps of the results in Auckland, drawn polling booth by polling booth, show that the poorest regions voted Liberal most strongly while the wealthiest business and professional suburbs were most likely to support an

<sup>69</sup> Chapman, 'Significance', pp. 135–136. For the 1935 election, Chapman identified six 'special country' electorates—Motueka, Buller, Westland, Thames, Waimarino, and Raglan. See pp. 147–148 for the other five categories. Chapman would later claim that rural areas in general had a scarcity of labouring jobs because of the depression. See also 'Response', p. 249. This statement is at odds with the views of other historians and warrants further investigation: see E. P. Malone, 'The Rural Vote: Voting Trends in the Waikato, 1922–1935', MA thesis, University of Auckland, 1958, pp. 32, 42, 54–55, and 181, for claims that both rural and farm labourers increased during the depression. John E. Martin, 'The Removal of Compulsory Arbitration and the Depression of the 1930s', *NZJH*, Vol. 28, No. 2 (1994), p. 137, claimed that numbers of farm employees increased during the depression. Morrell, 'New Zealand', p. 118, asserted there were 33 000 farm employees in 1930. R. T. Robertson, 'The Tyranny of Circumstances: Responses to Unemployment in New Zealand, 1929–1935, with Particular Reference to Dunedin', PhD thesis, Otago University, 1978, p. 417, noted that farm employment increased by 17 500 between 1928 and 1933. Robertson also highlighted the large increase in Public Works Department relief workers in the latter half of election year: R. T. Robertson, 'Government Responses to Unemployment, 1929–1935', *NZJH*, Vol. 16, No. 1 (1982), pp. 31–32.

<sup>70</sup> Chapman, 'Response', p. 227, where he gave the numbers as '67 762 voters at the maximum and 56 321 voters at the minimum.'

<sup>71</sup> Chapman, 'Response', p. 227.

<sup>72</sup> R. M. Chapman, 'From Labour to National', in *The Oxford History of New Zealand*, W. H. Oliver (ed.), (Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1981), p. 354.

<sup>73</sup> R. M. Chapman, 'The General Result', in R. M. Chapman, W. K. Jackson and A. V. Mitchell, *New Zealand Politics in Action—The 1960 General Election*, (Oxford University Press, London, 1962), pp. 255–257. Here, Chapman uses the Spearman rank-order correlation algorithm.

<sup>74</sup> R. M. Chapman, 'The Unusual Electorates', in R. M. Chapman, W. K. Jackson and A. V. Mitchell, *New Zealand Politics in Action—The 1960 General Election*, (Oxford University Press, London, 1962), p. 204.

Oppositionist or an Independent Liberal against the Government candidate.’<sup>75</sup> It was important, Chapman maintained, ‘to identify the social composition of an electorate, to group it correctly with its sectional peers and to watch lest regional cracks develop and generalizations about New Zealand split apart.’<sup>76</sup>

Chapman’s electorate typology creates three problems: firstly, his index of status and possessions derived from census data of managers, professionals, and employers, together with the incidence of washing machines, refrigerators, and hot water services.<sup>77</sup> Chapman asks us to make an unnecessary inferential leap from census data concerning washing machines to occupational classification: occupational data is readily available from electoral rolls.

Secondly, Chapman established ‘isopols’ (political contour lines) based on party vote proportions at individual polling places.<sup>78</sup> Using the polling place’s party preference, Chapman inferred the socio-economic mix of that district: high proportions of Labour votes indicated poorer areas with relatively high proportions of manual workers. This is a circular argument. Nor did Chapman test the extent to which manual workers—*known* manuals rather than *notional* manuals—voted for Labour.

Thirdly, Chapman used two different bases for his electorate typologies. One was the Representation Commission’s rural–urban distinction (a demographic rather than a socio-economic classification). The distinction was a perfectly suitable measure of the number of rural-dwelling people in the electorate—that was its purpose, after all—but it could only have defined numbers of farmers if there had also been a test of relationships between rural population and farmer numbers; but Chapman did not do this. His other electorate classification was based on rank-order correlations between socio-economic grades and party vote proportions. Given that Chapman wished to develop ‘generalizations about New Zealand’, one typology suitable for every kind of electorate would have been preferable.<sup>79</sup> Chapman reiterated the theory that areas won by Labour in 1935 were almost identical to those won by the Liberals in 1908. He left open the question

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<sup>75</sup> R. M. Chapman, ‘The Decline of the Liberals’, in *Ends and Means in New Zealand Politics*, Robert M. Chapman (ed.), (University of Auckland, Auckland, 1961), p. 20.

<sup>76</sup> Chapman, ‘The Unusual Electorates’, p. 234.

<sup>77</sup> Chapman, ‘The General Result’, pp. 256–257.

<sup>78</sup> Chapman, ‘The General Result’, p. 261, and Map C, p. 260.

<sup>79</sup> Chapman does not explain why he did not use electoral rolls—which would have provided one standard for both urban and rural electorates—for occupational data.



of whether 1935 marked the final demise of the Liberals or whether Labour represented the Liberals in different guise.<sup>80</sup>

This brings us to Chapman's hypothesis of humanitarianism—a 'lingering chord'—in New Zealand politics.<sup>81</sup> Chapman posited a humanitarian thread in the voter realignment that elected the Liberals in 1890, and subsequently elected Labour in 1935. The implication is that on both occasions farmers changed allegiance when economic conditions were at their worst, and voted for the left alternative.<sup>82</sup> Both elections saw the rise to power of parties who implemented programmes that, to some extent, redistributed wealth without being too radical for the wealthy and powerful to accept. Although the 1890 election is outside the scope of this thesis, Chapman's claim for a 'humanitarian' Liberal voting alliance depends equally on the claim that significant numbers of farmers supported Labour in 1935.

The relative strength of support for Labour across time in rural electorates compared with the party's traditional urban strongholds inspired Chapman to argue for a parallelism in New Zealand elections: between 1928 and 1960, different sections of voters in European electorates, farmers included, have largely moved in step in their acceptance of the Labour party. Chapman termed these elections 'national and nearly unanimous judgements of governmental performance'.<sup>83</sup> The claim depends upon Chapman's electorate typology being reliable, otherwise Labour could not be said to elicit parallel support from different voter sections. Following Chapman's methodology, if rural electorates were not amply stocked with farmers, there are no grounds for believing that large numbers of farmers voted Labour.

### *Consensus restated*

The 1950 thesis of Carol Rollo claimed a vital election role for farmers and middle-class voters. Again, the terms 'farmer' and 'rural' have been constantly interchanged.<sup>84</sup> Labour won the 'farming vote' because of its policies, apparently, but Rollo provided no analysis to support this claim.<sup>85</sup> Rollo, however, did note that

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<sup>80</sup> Chapman, 'Decline', p. 24. See also p. 18, where Chapman suggests that the last Liberal MPs and voters were absorbed by 'other parties' in 1935. Chapman first made the claim in his thesis: Chapman, 'Significance', pp. 120–121.

<sup>81</sup> Chapman, 'Significance', pp. 120–121.

<sup>82</sup> Farming electorates most attracted to Labour, Chapman believed, were those whose 'main surge of subdivision and provision of access were over'—'Significance', p. 126. This implies that Labour appealed to more established farmers, although most historians talked up the precarious finances of dairy farmers in particular.

<sup>83</sup> Chapman, 'Response', p. 252.

<sup>84</sup> Carol G. Rollo, 'The Election of 1935 in New Zealand', MA thesis, Canterbury College, 1950, p. 23.

<sup>85</sup> Rollo, 'The Election of 1935', pp. 72, 119, 124.

'Between the 1927 Electoral Act and the 1935 elections [sic] no allowance could be made for the considerable urbanisation which had taken place.'<sup>86</sup>

Unfortunately, Rollo did not explain what she meant by the term 'urbanisation', but it seems most likely that she referred to growth of small towns. If so, she may have underestimated contributions that small town expansion could make to rural electorate votes. Ironically, however, it also provides a basis to attack her major claim—if population increases in small towns were 'considerable', and if they were weighted towards Labour voters, then perhaps the explanation that farmers changed allegiance and voted for Labour starts to lose its *raison d'être*. Finally, Rollo suspected that numbers of seats won by Labour over-exaggerated the general acceptance of its policies.<sup>87</sup>

Sondra Wigglesworth's 1954 thesis focused on relationships between the depression—specifically, the Coalition's legislative measures to combat it—and the 1935 election outcome.<sup>88</sup> She concluded that the 'major cause of [Labour's] success was the alliance of floating voters—the lower middle class—with the small farmers...the same alliance that had brought the Liberal party into office in 1890.'<sup>89</sup> Like other analysts, Wigglesworth looked to Labour's election manifesto to explain farmers' shift: 'Labour's promise of guaranteed prices appealed greatly to the small farmers and it is possible that the majority of them had decided well in advance that they would vote with Labour.'<sup>90</sup>

Using electorate-level results, Wigglesworth gave four sources of Labour votes: solid Labour supporters; protest voters; manufacturers; and dairy farmers and others under the spell of Douglas Credit.<sup>91</sup> The Douglas Credit link is not testable because there was no Douglas Credit party as such, although one of the minor parties (Country) promoted Douglas Credit doctrines in a number of constituencies. Nevertheless, the claim is cited here because it has had a distinguished pedigree, and has offered a rationale to explain a mass

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<sup>86</sup> Rollo, 'The Election of 1935', p. 29.

<sup>87</sup> Rollo, 'The Election of 1935', p. 109.

<sup>88</sup> Sondra Wigglesworth, 'The Depression and the Election of 1935: a study of the Coalition's measures during the depression, and the effect of these measures upon the election result of 1935', MA thesis, University of Auckland, 1954. The topic was suggested by Chapman.

<sup>89</sup> Wigglesworth, 'The Depression and the Election of 1935', pp. 184–185.

<sup>90</sup> Wigglesworth, 'The Depression and the Election of 1935', p. 156.

<sup>91</sup> Wigglesworth, 'The Depression and the Election of 1935', p. 183.

conversion of farmers to Labour in 1935. The reasoning behind the claim is that Douglas Credit doctrines tapped into and focused public pressure calling for reform of the banking system.

In his thesis on the subject of Douglas Credit, Robin Clifton recognised the importance of Labour's new rural adherents. Clifton called them 'a decisive number of rural, or strongly rural seats' and held that the Douglas Credit movement was both 'a symptom of unrest and an agent which produced further discontent.'<sup>92</sup> Farmers wanted cheaper credit. The monetary reform doctrines of Major Douglas had been circulating during the depression, and Douglas himself visited New Zealand.. The Douglas Credit movement appeared to have its strongest following among North Island small farmers—the same areas that converted to Labour in 1935.<sup>93</sup> The inference was, therefore, that the Labour party manifesto appealed to many voters who were inclined towards Douglas Credit itself or towards monetary reform generally. Labour's John A. Lee called monetary reform the 'corridor' through which many new adherents joined Labour.<sup>94</sup>

In addition, the Auckland Farmers' Union, by far the largest and most vociferous subgroup in the country, promoted DSC doctrines as its official platform.<sup>95</sup> Several electorates within the Auckland Farmers' Union boundaries were not contested by Country party candidates—Clifton contended that the 'presence of a second monetary reform candidate would probably have cost Labour the seat.'<sup>96</sup> Nor did Labour oppose several Country party candidates; in fact, some Douglas Credit adherents stood as Labour candidates.<sup>97</sup> Clifton argued for an 'important role' for Douglas Credit in the election,<sup>98</sup> but the claim is impressionistic and un-testable.

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<sup>92</sup> Robin Clifton, 'Douglas Credit and the Labour Party, 1930–1935', MA thesis, Victoria University of Wellington, 1961, p. 325.

<sup>93</sup> Len Richardson, 'Parties and Political Change', in *The Oxford History of New Zealand*, Geoffrey Rice, (ed.), (Auckland University Press, Auckland, 1992), p. 225, claimed that areas of Douglas Credit rural membership corresponded with dairying areas. See also Austin V. Mitchell, *Politics and People in New Zealand*, (Whitcombe and Tombs Ltd, Christchurch, 1969), p. 30.

<sup>94</sup> John A. Lee, *Socialism in New Zealand*, (London, 1938), p. 43, cited in Sinclair, *Nash*, p. 116.

<sup>95</sup> Richardson, 'Parties and Political Change', p. 225.

<sup>96</sup> Clifton, 'Douglas Credit and the Labour Party', p. 232, instanced Thames, Marsden, Bay of Plenty, and Hauraki, of the test cases studied in this thesis.

<sup>97</sup> Sinclair, *Nash*, p. 115.

<sup>98</sup> Clifton, 'Douglas Credit and the Labour Party', p. 265.

First published in 1959, Keith Sinclair's *History of New Zealand* popularised history and did much to cement in place the orthodoxy.<sup>99</sup> According to Sinclair, the slump 'unit[ed] the forces of Labour',<sup>100</sup> and helped the party 'partially to revive the old Liberal combination of trade union, small farmer and manufacturer, and to win, as well as its working-class strongholds, a number of...rural and semi-rural seats, notably in the North Island, where Social Credit was strong.'<sup>101</sup> Sinclair may also have used the Representation Commission's rural dweller proportions to determine whether electorates were rural or semi-rural, from which he then inferred small farmer votes. In any case, the general impression one gains from Sinclair is that large numbers of farmers voted for the Labour party.

Throughout the 1960s, historians continued to promote the orthodox interpretation of the election result. In *The Story of New Zealand*, W. H. Oliver perpetuated an ambiguous use of 'rural' and 'farmer', when he referred to 'urban' electorates' as distinct from 'small farmer', not 'rural', electorates.<sup>102</sup> In a history of the Labour party, Bruce Brown explained that the 1935 election result was due to farmers (along with 'businessmen' and 'thrifty widows') who 'flock[ed] in their thousands to vote for the Party.'<sup>103</sup>

B. D. Graham, in his 1963 essay on the rise and fall of the Country party (noted above), stated that 'Labour won over many farmers' with its platform for monetary reform and the guaranteed price. Graham also focused on the election campaign to explain Labour's victory—his reference for this claim was Michael Joseph Savage's election pamphlet. Graham included government data on agricultural and pastoral bankruptcies, but these data undermine the case for 'widespread foreclosures'.<sup>104</sup>

R. S. Milne's comprehensive 1966 study of party politics in New Zealand supported the orthodoxy with a muted claim for Reform's loss of 'farming support' to Labour in the depression.<sup>105</sup> Michael Bassett attributed

<sup>99</sup> Keith Sinclair, *A History of New Zealand*, (Allen Lane, London, 1959), rev. ed. 1980, p. 265, agreed that dairy farmers were among the main supporters of DSC. See also Sinclair, 'The Lee-Sutch Syndrome: New Zealand's Labour Party Policies and Politics, 1930–40', *NZJH*, Vol. 8, No. 2, (October 1974), pp. 113–114.

<sup>100</sup> Sinclair, *History*, p. 264.

<sup>101</sup> Sinclair, *History*, p. 269. See also Sinclair, 'The Lee-Sutch Syndrome', pp. 113–114, for his alliance of 'farmers and small townsmen'.

<sup>102</sup> W. H. Oliver, *The Story of New Zealand*, (Faber and Faber, London, 1960), p. 187.

<sup>103</sup> Bruce M. Brown, *The Rise of New Zealand Labour: A History of the New Zealand Labour Party from 1916 to 1940*, (Price Milburn, Wellington, 1962), p. 181: supervised by Beaglehole.

<sup>104</sup> The data are: 1929, 96 foreclosures; 1930, 126; 1931, 160; 1932, 128; 1933, 99; 1934, 53; 1935, 45.

<sup>105</sup> Milne, *Political Parties*, p. 119. The same claim was earlier made in John M. Orbell, 'Politics of Prosperity: A Study of Political Opinion in Auckland City and Surrounds, 1938–1957', MA thesis, University of

Labour's penetration of 'farming electorates' to the influence of Douglas Credit.<sup>106</sup> Although he stopped short of saying 'farmers', it is clear that Bassett believed many farmers had changed their allegiance. Bassett would later argue that 'By 1934, many dairy farmers...had been forced off their land',<sup>107</sup> a claim that portrays dairying as well into the doldrums, but one that is difficult to substantiate from official sources.

Into the 1970s, the convention that dairy farmers shifted allegiance to Labour in 1935 continued with David Hall's social history *The Golden Echo*. Hall questioned why New Zealanders treated the 1930s slump as inevitable—or an act of God—when other countries talked of human failing and lack of knowledge. New Zealanders' belief in the inevitability of the slump created a sense of powerlessness and desperation—self-denial and hard work were not enough—that worked against the Coalition. A 'wave of disgust and despair...[that] pushed the Labour Party into power' came partly from dairy farmers who had 'largely switched [their] vote.'<sup>108</sup> In the context of testable claims, we can take 'largely' to mean a majority of dairy farmers. While that is not necessarily the same as a majority of farmers, it amounts to the same thing in this study because dairy farmers were such a large proportion of all farmers. It is possible, but seems unlikely, that Hall may have meant most dairy farmers voted Labour but other types of farmer did not.

Tony Simpson focused on the election campaign and voter realignment to explain the 1935 result. His essay on style in New Zealand politics attributed the win to the Labour party's conscious adoption of a 'Seddonian populist' style after the death of its doctrinaire leader Harry Holland. Labour appealed to what Simpson refers to as the 'major mythological element of New Zealand society'—the ability to better oneself.<sup>109</sup> Simpson's later polemic study of democracy, *New Zealand-style*, looked to economic factors in the 1920s for the roots of farmers' behaviour in 1935.<sup>110</sup> Simpson was adamant that farming and white-collar votes made a

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Auckland, 1960, p. 60.

<sup>106</sup> Michael Bassett, *The Depression of the Thirties*, Auckland: Heinemann, 1967, p. 36.

<sup>107</sup> Michael Bassett, *Coates of Kaipara*, (Auckland University Press, Auckland, 1995), p. 216. It has frequently been asserted that farmers walked off the land during the depression, but the claim remains anecdotal.

<sup>108</sup> David Hall, *The Golden Echo: Some Aspects of New Zealand Social History*, (Collins Bros, Auckland, 1971), pp. 213–215.

<sup>109</sup> Tony Simpson, 'Huey Long's Other Island: Style in New Zealand Politics', in *New Zealand Politics: A Reader*, S. Levine (ed.), (Cheshire Publishing, Melbourne, 1975), pp. 159–160. This may be the other side of that *mentalité* identified by Lipson—the need for security.

<sup>110</sup> Tony Simpson, *A vision betrayed: the decline of democracy in New Zealand* (Hodder and Stoughton, Auckland, 1984), p. 155 ff.

difference in 1935, and focused on the role of the depression and its attendant social distress in bringing about farmers' change of allegiance.<sup>111</sup>

Barry Gustafson repeated the orthodox interpretation of the election result in a number of works. In a history of the Labour party, Gustafson declared that farmers had been instrumental in the 1890 election of the Liberals, when 'working-class voters combined with white-collar radicals, struggling farmers and would-be farmers',<sup>112</sup> but he gave no indication how to identify 'struggling' farmers. In a history of the National party, Gustafson maintained that Labour won in 1935 because the 'Liberal alliance' had reformed.<sup>113</sup> At the same time, Democrat intervention cost the Nationalists between eight and 12 seats, and some high-polling Independent candidates also hurt the Nationalists. Gustafson doubted that any party in power during the depression years would have survived the subsequent election, and noted the stimulus that Douglas Credit gave to Labour voters. Despite Labour's attractiveness to voters, Gustafson contended, the Coalition lost the election through its own disunity and lack of communication.<sup>114</sup>

Two final examples carry the consensus into the twenty-first century.<sup>115</sup> The first is Stephen Church's thesis on electoral stability and party politics, which reaffirms the Labour party's attraction for 'formerly sceptical' white-collar voters, as well as for 'middle class voters'.<sup>116</sup> Labour also won over enough 'rural voters', who were normally conservative but desperate for positive change. Church claimed that Labour benefited by eight additional seats because of the country quota, but failed to mention that Labour would have picked up four

<sup>111</sup> Simpson, *A vision betrayed*, p. 50.

<sup>112</sup> Barry Gustafson, *Labour's Path to Political Independence: The Origins of the New Zealand Labour Party, 1900-1919*, (Auckland University Press, Auckland, 1980), p. 13.

<sup>113</sup> Barry Gustafson, *The First 50 Years: A History of the New Zealand National Party*, (Reed Methuen, Auckland, 1986), p. x.

<sup>114</sup> Gustafson, *The First 50 Years*, pp. 4-7.

<sup>115</sup> James Belich's recent general history *Paradise Reforged: A History of the New Zealanders From the 1880s to the Year 2000*, Allen Lane, Auckland, 2001, p. 259, attributes the rise of the Labour party an 'erosion of New Zealand's populist compact', without specifying the compact's occupational composition. At p. 261, Belich repeats the claims that Social Credit supporters voted for Labour, and that the Democrats and the Country party split the right-wing vote in rural electorates but gives no detail. Michael King, *The Penguin History of New Zealand*, Viking, Auckland, 2003, p. 314, simply states that the Labour party won power when it convinced the 'electorate at large'.

<sup>116</sup> Stephen Church, 'Electoral systems, party systems and stability in New Zealand', PhD thesis, University of Canterbury, 1998, p. 152. Curiously, analysts use the term 'class' in respect of 'working-class', and happily equate 'blue-collar' with 'working-class', but almost always (Church being a rare exception) refer to 'white-collar' rather than to 'middle-class' voters; in other words, there is not the same equivalence between the terms 'middle-class' and 'white-collar'.

additional urban seats anyway, without the quota.<sup>117</sup> Church supported the claim for a Liberal alliance, although he stopped short of calling it that. Labour's electoral majority, according to Church, was distributed nationally in a similar way to the Liberal vote pattern and was an 'inheritance' from the Liberals to Labour.<sup>118</sup> Like other analysts, Church attributed Democrat votes to conservative protestors.<sup>119</sup>

The second example of the persistence of the consensus is Raymond Miller's essay 'Labour', in which he uses the phrase 'coalition of support' for the Labour party's adherents in 1935. Miller maintains that the party's electoral successes 'included a cluster of rural seats wooed on the promise of cheap credit.'<sup>120</sup> One takes it that 'rural seats' equates to 'farmers', and one can only hope that Miller would have made it clear if he meant that farmers did not vote Labour but that other rural-dwellers did.

The consensus, then, comprises a primary voting alignment between manual workers and farmers; a secondary voting alignment that sees white-collar workers and farm workers included in the Labour-voting 'alliance'; Democrat votes that would otherwise have gone to Nationalist candidates; the influence of Douglas Social Credit that popularised monetary reform, particularly among dairy farmers; and suggestions that large numbers of farmers were particularly hard hit by the depression. Proponents of the 'Liberal alliance' have argued strongly that prosperous times for farmers led to their political conservatism.<sup>121</sup> Only in hard times did poorer and less secure farmers move towards the political left.

### *Consensus questioned*

One systematic challenge to the consensus has accompanied several others that have addressed particular elements. We begin with the last strand—that farmers were particularly hard-hit by the depression. If farmers were not as badly off as had been supposed, then the argument that Labour's manifesto appealed to farmers is weakened. A leading economist, Gary Hawke, challenged claims that dairy farmers were hardest hit by the

<sup>117</sup> Church, 'Electoral systems', p. 195. For his claim concerning the additional seats, Church references Chapman, but Chapman made it clear that eight seats was a gross figure, and needed to take into account additional urban seats had there been no country quota: Chapman, *Political Scene*, appendix.

<sup>118</sup> Church, 'Electoral systems', p. 194.

<sup>119</sup> Church, 'Electoral systems', p. 191.

<sup>120</sup> Raymond Miller, 'Labour', in *New Zealand Government and Politics*, Raymond Miller (ed.), (Oxford University Press, Auckland, 2001), p. 236.

<sup>121</sup> For example, Bellringer, Graham, Lipson, Morrell, Reid, and Robinson (referenced above), as well as W. J. Gardner, 'The Reform Party', in *Ends and Means in New Zealand Politics*, R. M. Chapman (ed.), (University of Auckland, 1961), pp. 29–31.

depression and the consequent fall in export prices. Hawke noted the uneven effect of the depression,<sup>122</sup> and using ratio of net to gross incomes, cautioned that it was only a 'weak presumption' that dairy farmers were more badly affected than sheep farmers.<sup>123</sup>

In a microhistory of the Matamata estate, D. B. Waterson investigated the rate of farm failures between 1920 and 1936. In the period from 1922 to 1926, he instanced 18 farm failures, but only eight failures between 1930 and 1933. Waterson put the improvement down to the Coalition government's relief measures.<sup>124</sup> In similar vein, Tom Brooking noted fewer farm bankruptcies in the early 1930s than in the 1920s,<sup>125</sup> and B. D. Graham's table of bankruptcies is noted above.

Barrie Macdonald and David Thomson, in a study of farmers' economic conditions during the 1930s, claimed that mortgage relief, 'fundamental to the survival and subsequent recovery of export-based agriculture', was dealt with in detail by contemporary historians and by a few others in the 1950s and 1960s, but had been largely neglected since. MacDonald and Thomson attributed the neglect to a 'preoccupation with the rise of Labour, and Labour politicians' that led analysts to understate both the Coalition government's measures to protect farmers as well as the Labour government's continuation of Coalition policies.<sup>126</sup>

The second objection to the consensus questions the extent to which farmers were potential Labour voters. Michael Pugh attributed to farmers—even those in distress—a certain sort of doctrinaire thinking that distrusted 'government activity' because it undermined 'moral self-reliance'.<sup>127</sup> R. S. Milne, although accepting that farmers were new Labour voters, challenged the extent of farmers' embrace of Labour. Milne cited several farmer prejudices against the party: the perception of Labour as a socialist party with just a few farmer MPs, Labour's opposition to the freehold, its wish to abolish the country quota, and its support for

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<sup>122</sup> Gary R. Hawke, *The Making of New Zealand: An Economic History*, (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1985), pp. 123–126.

<sup>123</sup> Hawke, *The Making of New Zealand*, p. 139.

<sup>124</sup> D. B. Waterson, 'The Matamata Estate', *NZJH*, Vol. 3, No. 1 (1969), p. 46.

<sup>125</sup> Tom Brooking, 'Economic Transformation', in *The Oxford History of New Zealand*, W. H. Oliver, ed., (Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1981), p. 236.

<sup>126</sup> Barrie Macdonald and David Thomson, 'Mortgage Relief, Farm Finance, and Rural Depression in New Zealand in the 1930s', *NZJH*, Vol. 21, No. 2 (1987), pp. 228–229.

<sup>127</sup> Michael Pugh, 'The New Zealand Legion, 1932–1935', *NZJH*, Vol. 5, No. 1 (1971), pp. 49–51.



compulsory arbitration, as grounds for farmer suspicion.<sup>128</sup> Milne broke new ground by maintaining that perhaps 15 to 20 percent of manual workers voted for the conservatives.<sup>129</sup>

The third objection is a cautionary note: perhaps, rural electorates were not as homogenous as most historians appear to have assumed. Tony Simpson, for example, observed that neither Westland nor Waimarino were 'rural seats proper',<sup>130</sup> which one takes to mean that their farmer to non-farmer balance was atypical. However, Simpson did not appear to regard the problem as one that applied to rural electorates generally. Like James Watson, cited previously, Milne recognised that farmers were not a homogenous group.<sup>131</sup>

The only systematic challenge to the consensus came from a thesis by Edmond Malone (noted previously). Like Chapman, Malone studied voting trends at polling place level and used these to draw conclusions about occupational groups.<sup>132</sup> Malone made much of a rapid increase in numbers of rural workers before 1935, which he believed was due in part to the depression sending unemployed town workers and relatives back to the farm,<sup>133</sup> and in part to local body employees, whose numbers 'swelled considerably' during the depression.<sup>134</sup> Nor did all unemployed go back to the farm; Malone insisted that out of a population of 9 000, there were 700 unemployed in Waikato towns.<sup>135</sup> Malone found that Labour received many more votes in towns (56 percent on average) than in country areas (35 percent on average).<sup>136</sup> He emphasised that,

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<sup>128</sup> Milne, *Political Parties*, pp. 115–116.

<sup>129</sup> Milne, *Political Parties*, p. 87. More recent work has been done in this area by Miles Fairburn: 'The Rise of the Left and Working-Class Voting Behaviour in New Zealand', *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, Vol. XXXV, No. 4, pp. 523–555.

<sup>130</sup> Simpson, 'Huey Long's Other Island', p. 157. Waimarino electorate is one of the 10 test cases in Part II of this thesis.

<sup>131</sup> Milne, *Political Parties*, pp. 84, 88–89. See also James Watson, 'Rural Life', *passim*, noted above.

<sup>132</sup> In Malone's case, the polling place survey was based on personal knowledge of the area, although he admitted that this rendered his typology arbitrary. Malone's original intention had been to use 'electoral rolls and other sources [to] establish the occupational pattern of a booth district with greater certainty', but he had been unable to do so. Occupations were 'deduced from other evidence' (p. ii), which included census data.

<sup>133</sup> Malone, 'Rural Vote', p. 42.

<sup>134</sup> Malone, 'Rural Vote', p. 32. For a contrary view—that population changes during the depression were slight and of short duration—see Lucy Marsden, 'Demographic Change and the Depression of the 1930s in New Zealand', *New Zealand Population Review*, Vol. 18, Nos. 1 and 2 (1992). Marsden's data were, however, marriage, fertility, and mortality rates, not electoral roll entries, nor the movement of unemployed and Public Works Department workers into rural areas.

<sup>135</sup> Malone, 'Rural Vote', p. 180. While this rate (7.7 percent) is not high in absolute terms, it is easily sufficient to tip an electoral balance.

<sup>136</sup> Malone, 'Rural Vote', p. 214.

compared with previous elections, there were substantially higher numbers of votes in all rural areas;<sup>137</sup> and that polling places with noticeable increases in votes—largely from ‘new’ voters or ‘temporary country residents’—saw substantial swings to Labour.<sup>138</sup> In addition to the fact that farmers were a minority of the Waikato region’s population in this period,<sup>139</sup> the depression wrought demographic changes that increased numbers of non-farmer voters.<sup>140</sup> Malone singled out miners, public works gangs and farm workers contributing to demographic change in rural areas.<sup>141</sup> Malone summed up his position:

To speak of a wholesale change of allegiance among the rural voters of the Waikato is to exaggerate the true extent of the conservative losses. A solid body of Labour supporters had been growing up, not at the expense of the mass of conservative opinion, but out of the decline and fall of Liberalism. Abnormal economic pressure reinforced this strong minority sufficiently to gain a temporary ascendancy, which was to be weakened in 1938 and finally to be lost in 1943.<sup>142</sup>

On the one hand, Malone endorses in a qualified way the view that some farmers voted for Labour. On the other hand, he stands apart from the consensus in assessing that farmers were fewer than had been assumed, and in portraying rural areas in the aftermath of the depression, not as consisting of farmers necessarily, but also of many new Labour voters.

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<sup>137</sup> Malone, ‘Rural Vote’, pp. 181–182.

<sup>138</sup> Malone, ‘Rural Vote’, pp. 226–227. In a later survey of elections spanning 60 years, J. H. Nagel determined that lower turnout tended to work against the Labour party. A 10 percent fall in turnout would see Labour lose an average 7.7 percent against a 9.4 percent rise in the minor party vote: Nagel, ‘Voter turnout in New Zealand general elections, 1928–1988’, p. 27. Perhaps the higher turnout fell within what Angus Campbell described as ‘peripheral voters’ joining ‘core voters’ in a ‘high-stimulus election’: Angus Campbell, ‘Surge and Decline: A Study of Electoral Change’, in *Elections and the Political Order*, Angus Campbell, Philip E. Converse, Warren E. Miller and Donald E. Stokes, (John Wiley, New York, 1966), pp. 42–43, and 46 ff. Vladimir Key contended that ‘An unusually rapid rate of growth in the total number of voters from one election to the next is accompanied by an exceptionally high rate of increase in the number of supporters of one of the parties but not of the other.’: V. O. Key Jr., *Politics, Parties, and Pressure Groups*, (Crowell, New York, 1942), 5th ed. 1969, pp. 590–591.

<sup>139</sup> Malone, ‘Rural Vote’, p. 2. Malone added that farmers’ importance was accentuated by the effects of the country quota. The Waikato district discussed here comprised the counties of Raglan, Waikato, Waipa, Hauraki Plains, Piako, Matamata, and their boroughs and town districts; it is not the same areas as those that constituted the Waikato electorate proper.

<sup>140</sup> Malone, ‘Rural Vote’, p. 177.

<sup>141</sup> Malone, ‘Rural Vote’, p. 31.

<sup>142</sup> Malone, ‘Rural Vote’, p. 228.

### *Conclusion*

Orthodox accounts of the Labour party's win in 1935 focus on the role of farmers. Other occupations—in particular, manual workers—have received scant attention. Farmers, however, were economically and politically dominant, and historians seem to have preoccupied themselves with a belief that large numbers of farmers shifted towards the political left in response to severe economic depression. There is a conflation here: the terms 'rural' and 'farmer' are not synonyms and ought not to be used interchangeably as most of the historiography has done. Perhaps some rural electorates had high proportions of farmers; perhaps others, like Chapman's 'special country' electorates, had high proportions of manual workers. Nevertheless, analysts have not produced occupational profiles. Instead, they have left us with an assumption that electorates with high proportions of rural dwellers had high proportions of farmers.

Explanations for Labour's rise in 1935, therefore, include untested assumptions (proportions of farmers in rural electorates); unsupported assumptions against hard data (numbers of rural bankruptcies); important statistics ignored (huge increases in vote numbers comprising increases in voter turnout and increases in electoral roll numbers); and important data sources overlooked. Seldom have analysts used polling place data; but arguably more serious has been a failure to use electoral roll data to assess more reliably occupational proportions.

Moreover, quantitative data featured in Chapman's work (polling place votes, rural–urban proportions, census data, and a Status and Possessions Index), and in Malone's study (polling place votes and unspecified occupational data); but the two historians came to quite different conclusions. Chapman's view was that large numbers of farmers, the dominant occupation in rural electorates, shifted allegiance to Labour. Malone suggested that an influx of manual workers during the depression altered the occupational profile of rural areas in favour of the Labour party. In any case, Malone doubted that farmers were as numerous as had been supposed.

Doubtless, there were farmers who voted Labour even before the 1935 election, just as there were manual workers who voted for the conservatives.<sup>143</sup> Historians seem to have assumed that because some rural electorates voted Labour in 1935, farmers had generally changed their votes; and farmers had changed their votes because they were witnessing the depression-led hard times of others as well as their own. In addition, historians have claimed that Labour softened its former socialist rhetoric, and the party's manifesto had been

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<sup>143</sup> See Milne, *Political Parties*, p. 87, noted above. Also Fairburn, 'Why did the New Zealand Labour Party Fail to Win Office', p. 107, argued that, even in Labour's urban strongholds, perhaps one-quarter of the manuals did not support the party.

tailored to suit farming interests. In most cases, however, the reader is left to speculate because major claims have not been supported with evidence that goes beyond Labour's platform and its supposed appeal to one or other group, or beyond a decision by a number of rural constituencies to vote for the party. The primary aim of chapter 3 is to find reliable, quantitative ways to assess claims from the historiography.

The historiographical claims testable through quantitative evidence are:

1. *Farmers voted Labour.*
  2. *Farm workers voted Labour.*
  3. *White-collar workers voted Labour.*
  4. *Minor party votes came disproportionately at the expense of Nationalist votes.*
  5. *Changes to the occupational profile of rural electorates during the depression benefited the Labour party.*
  6. *Increased voter turnout benefited Labour in 1935.*
  7. *Farmers constituted a clear majority of male electors in rural electorates.*
- The term 'clear majority' comes from Chapman's reference, noted above, to 'electorates with a clear majority of the population living on farms',<sup>144</sup> and to his 'wholly farmer electorates'.<sup>145</sup> It is also akin to 'farmer constituencies',<sup>146</sup> and, to a lesser extent, 'dominated by farmers'.<sup>147</sup>
8. *The proportion of farmers in a rural electorate can be inferred from the proportion of rural dwellers determined by the Representation Commission.*

This hypothesis is based on an inference drawn from the literature. Most historians have consistently failed to state the sources of their claims concerning numbers of farmers in rural electorates; nevertheless, it is well worth testing the likely origin of their claims.

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<sup>144</sup> Chapman, 'Response', p. 227.

<sup>145</sup> Chapman, *Politics in Action*, p. 237.

<sup>146</sup> Chapman, 'Response', p. 242.

<sup>147</sup> Chapman, 'From Labour to National', p. 354.

## Chapter 3: Methodology

This thesis quantitatively tests research hypotheses developed from the historiography. Quantification rests on qualitative decisions, and one of the primary aims of this chapter is to make all such decisions explicit, to meet one of the fundamental tests of a quantitative study: replication. This chapter describes primary sources and database considerations, and goes on to data protocols and statistical tools. The chapter gives particular attention to the choice of test cases: the electorates whose rolls provide the data for study. The chapter concludes with an analysis of the research hypotheses

The core research in this thesis analyses the electoral rolls of nine Labour-voting rural electorates in 1935. A tenth electorate that voted National provides a useful contrast. In addition, one of the nine cases contains a vertical time-series study. This is the Waikato electorate for the flanking election years of 1931 and 1938. The 1931 roll is analysed for possible structural factors that may have influenced or determined electoral dynamics in 1935. The 1938 roll is analysed to see whether voting correlations present in 1935 continued in the succeeding election, which Labour lost heavily in Waikato. The additional Waikato roll study may help to explain why rural electorates began to spurn Labour in 1938.

The aims of the study determined occupational categories for the database.<sup>148</sup> This study investigates claims couched mainly in terms of the voting behaviour of farmers, farm workers, white-collar workers and blue-collar (manual) workers. These are the four categories used in the database. Further subdivision of these categories is possible, but the resulting numbers in the sub-categories are too small to produce authoritative findings. For example, miners have been cited as an example of industrial workers in rural areas, but in this study miners were not only highly localised, but a very small proportion of male electors (1.2 percent of males in Marsden, for example).

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<sup>148</sup> This thesis studies certain claims made in connection with the 1935 general election, and is not a study of social class. John E. Martin, 'Whither the Rural Working Class in Nineteenth-Century New Zealand?' *NZJH*, Vol. 17, No. 1 (April, 1983), pp. 21–42, discusses categorisation of rural workers.

### *The four male occupational categories*

This thesis takes the term ‘farmer’ to include all types. The historiography of the 1935 election draws distinctions between farmers who were ‘poor’, ‘insecure’, ‘established’, and so on, but such distinctions do not lend themselves to mass quantification.<sup>149</sup> Here, farmer electors are not differentiated by type of farming. Electoral rolls overwhelmingly use the generic term ‘farmer’, even in constituencies with a clear majority of dairy farmers.<sup>150</sup> Specific labels such as ‘dairy farmer’, ‘sheep farmer’, ‘poultry farmer’, and ‘bee farmer’ are relatively rare on contemporary electoral rolls, so the rolls cannot be used to test the voting allegiance of different types of farmer. The farmer category includes ‘settler’, a description found in large numbers in earlier electoral rolls, but largely gone by the 1930s. Farm managers are counted as farmers because they were more akin to farmers than to farm workers: farm managers worked for salary rather than wages, and although employees of the farmer, were themselves often employers.<sup>151</sup> Finally, the farmer category includes ‘sharemilker’ because sharemilkers worked on contract rather than for wages, owned a share of the herd, and were generally in a transitional phase towards farm ownership.

The farm worker category distinguishes manual workers on farms from those who were rural labourers not employed on farms: ‘farm workers’, ‘farm assistants’ and ‘farm labourers’ merit their own category so that the data can test claims for their voting behaviour. Some farm workers were obviously farmers’ sons and, therefore, more likely to share in the aspirations and ideals of the family. In contrast, the Unemployment Board placed some workers on farms as subsidized labour. These workers were much less likely to share farmers’ ideals and concerns. Wages and conditions were often marginal,<sup>152</sup> and there was little likelihood of eventual farm ownership for them. It is not possible to know whether a worker was a farmer’s son or relative, or a (possibly) disenchanted urban transplant; so all those listed as ‘farm worker’, ‘farm labourer’ or ‘farm assistant’ are put in one category and will not influence results for other categories.

<sup>149</sup> One would need large-scale machine-readable files of farm profitability, balance sheets, and so on. The author knows of no such data on an electorate-wide scale.

<sup>150</sup> The 1935 Waikato electoral roll lists 2,558 ‘farmers’ but only 96 ‘dairy farmers’, when the 1936 *Census* shows that there were at least twice as many dairy as sheep farmers nationally.

<sup>151</sup> In the Congalton–Havighurst rankings, ‘farm manager’ was ranked equal in status to ‘Farmer, owner, operates land with family’: Cora Vellecoop, ‘Social Strata in New Zealand’, in John Forster, ed., *Social Process in New Zealand: Readings in Sociology*, (Longman Paul, Auckland, 1969), Table 4, p. 243.

<sup>152</sup> Prior to the 1935 general election, there was some spirited correspondence in the *Waikato Times*, one correspondent claiming that good treatment of farm labourers was the ‘exception rather than the rule’, another, that he was paid five shillings per week to milk 72 cows and to live in quarters previously inhabited by rabbits: *Waikato Times*, 13 November 1935, p. 9.

The manual category comprises those who performed manual labour for wages, including both skilled and unskilled workers, tradesmen and craftsmen. Also included in the manual category are 'relief workers' who worked on government-subsidised unemployment schemes, and miners who were generally coal miners but in some cases were goldminers. Some goldminers also worked on government-subsidised schemes. The manual category addresses claims for Sinclair and Condliffe's, 'unionists', Gustafson's 'working-class voters', and Airey's 'labour element', as noted in the historiography.

In contemporary New Zealand, white-collar workers were a very different mix to that of recent decades. Fundamentally, this study takes white-collar workers as non-manual workers: salaried workers, businessmen, manufacturers, shop owners, retail workers, managers, contractors and the self-employed.<sup>153</sup> Included are professionals such as clerks (who were typically male and enjoyed much higher status than do clerical workers of more recent times), schoolteachers, accountants, surveyors, and so on. This category includes Sinclair's 'manufacturer', Wigglesworth's 'lower middle class', as well as Brown and Airey's 'businessmen'. In short, the category covers all those who were not 'farmers', 'manual workers', or 'farm workers'. A representative list of occupational descriptions is given in Appendix B.

The white-collar category proved problematic in one respect: differentiating between workers and small working proprietors in trades such as baking, butchery, carpentry, and so on. 'Butcher' might refer to someone on a freezing works chain, the working owner of a butchery, or an employee of the business. Such working employers are, in a sense, manual workers but that is overridden by their status as employers. The best that could be achieved was to check whether that individual was listed in Wise's directory as a proprietor. In that event, the individual became a white-collar entry; otherwise (and in most cases), he was classed as 'manual'.

Some occupational typologies distinguish between lower white-collars, like those already mentioned; and higher white-collar workers, such as managers of larger companies. It is theoretically possible to separate lower and upper white-collar workers, but the proportions of the two groups differed greatly. White-collar workers averaged 17 percent of male electors in the surveyed electorates, but upper white-collars as a sub-category averaged less than three percent, compromising conclusions based on such small

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<sup>153</sup> Jack Vowles argues against including both employed and self-employed ('an important dimension') across manual and non-manual categories: Vowles 'Social Groups and Electoral Behaviour', pp. 97–98. He goes on to say that the mixed approach has dominated electoral studies in New Zealand as well as in Britain. Peter Aimer and Ian McAllister disagree: in 'Electoral Behaviour: Progress, Problems, and Prospects', in Holland (ed.), *Electoral Behaviour*, p. 182, they state that the manual / non-manual distinction is not significant in New Zealand elections.

numbers.<sup>154</sup> For the present study, it is preferable to sacrifice a distinction between lower and upper white-collars in favour of more statistical reliability for the aggregate white-collar category.

The above four categories do not include those listed as 'unemployed', 'gentleman', 'no occupation', or 'retired', but this typically applies to about one percent of the roll.<sup>155</sup> Retirees who listed their former occupation, such as 'retired Army captain' or 'retired farmer', are included in the relevant occupational category.

### *Primary sources*

This study uses three primary sources. The first is *Wises's Post Office Directory*, mentioned above as a cross-check on proprietors. The second primary source is the party vote at polling place level.<sup>156</sup> The third primary source is electoral rolls. There are a number of points to make here. Firstly, rolls were systematically updated before each general or by-election, and were, therefore, more current than the five-yearly population census which, as we know, was not updated between 1926 and 1936. In any case, it is a huge undertaking to match census catchment areas to electorate boundaries, and raises questions of data reliability.

Secondly, voter registration had been compulsory since 1924; although there was undoubtedly a degree of non-compliance, there is no reason to suppose that it was widespread or systematic (although it probably involved manuals and farm workers more than white-collar workers or farmers). Thirdly, there is no real alternative to using electoral rolls. *Wise's Post Office Directory* includes alphabetical lists of people in cities and small towns, but frequently omits occupation and only lists heads of households. There are no other potential sources of data, as the period studied is before the advent of voter opinion surveys.

Fourthly, electoral rolls had a useful division into 'general' and 'supplementary' rolls. General rolls list those registered for the previous election, and usually closed about six months before a general election.<sup>157</sup> Supplementary rolls list those who had reached voting age; had died, moved into or out of the

<sup>154</sup> Micro-history, using a variety of other primary sources, would inform this question but lies outside the scope of the present study.

<sup>155</sup> For example, of 6 385 male roll entries, the 1935 Waikato roll lists 66 males (one percent) as Not Otherwise Described.

<sup>156</sup> Election results: *AJHR*, H-33A, 1936. These do not supply candidates' party affiliation, obtained instead from the *Christchurch Press*, 28 November 1935.

<sup>157</sup> The General Roll closed on a date—usually six months before the election—fixed by the Governor General, and supplementary rolls were compiled immediately before the following general election. The Electoral Act (1927) required persons to apply for enrolment immediately after qualifying—within one month of taking up residence in an electorate—otherwise they were liable to prosecution. Lipson, *Politics*, p. 331, seems to be saying that the qualifying period was six months, as noted above.



area; and those who had changed address, occupation, or marital status. The 1935 supplementary rolls indicate, therefore, changes to occupational categories towards the end of the depression.

Fifthly, electoral rolls in the 1930s contained different information for males and females. Males were listed by address and occupation, but females were listed by address and marital status—‘spinster’, ‘married’, or ‘widow’. Claims in the historiography turn upon occupational categories, forcing the exclusion of females from the analysis. Ideally, one would wish to remove the female vote from the database, but this is not possible.<sup>158</sup> Instead, we must assume that farmers’ wives and daughters voted along the same party lines.

There are good reasons to believe that farmers’ wives were unlikely to vote against their husbands. There were more males than females on the rolls, and males had higher rates of electoral participation than did females.<sup>159</sup> Lower participation by females suggests that they were not as politicised as males, and less likely, by implication, to vote against husbands and fathers. Jack Vowles rated farming households highly in predictive voting power, implying that family members tend to vote along the same party lines.<sup>160</sup>

Nellie Coad, a contemporary, wrote that females voted according to ‘their special interests, and not along lines of sex.’<sup>161</sup> Special interests of dairy farmers’ wives were conceivably home, family, and working the family farm. According to Erik Olssen, motherhood and domesticity were central ideologies long before 1935;<sup>162</sup> moreover, rural New Zealand in the 1930s was a patriarchy: home and work were undivided, with the family ‘a vigorous social and economic unit.’<sup>163</sup> Notions of patriarchy in the New Zealand

<sup>158</sup> Male and female votes are separately enumerated only at electorate, not polling place, level.

<sup>159</sup> Females on the 10 rolls in this study averaged 45.4 percent of entries, compared with a national average of 49.7 percent; and averaged 89.1 turnout compared with 89.5 percent national average for females and 92.1 percent for the males in this study. In a large-scale New Zealand electoral study, Linda Moore concluded that ‘the pattern of men’s and women’s turnout shows that women were less likely to vote than men over the first half of the twentieth century,’ although the difference was ‘never large.’ Linda M.G. Moore, ‘Gender Counts: Men, Women and Electoral Politics, 1893–1919’, MA thesis, University of Canterbury, 2004, p. 119.

<sup>160</sup> Jack Vowles, ‘Social Groups and Electoral Behaviour’, in Holland (ed.), pp. 112–113.

<sup>161</sup> Nellie E. Coad, *New Zealand from Tasman to Massey*, (H. H. Tombs Ltd, Wellington, 1934), p. 281

<sup>162</sup> Erik Olssen, ‘Women, Work, and Family: 1880–1926’, in Phillida Bunkle and Beryl Hughes (eds), *Women in New Zealand Society*, (George Allen and Unwin, Auckland, 1980), p. 175. Olssen was studying the non-agricultural workforce, but there is no reason to suppose that the agricultural workforce was any the less affected.

<sup>163</sup> Erik Olssen, ‘Towards a New Society’, in *The Oxford History of New Zealand*, Geoffrey Rice (ed.), (Oxford University Press, Auckland, 1992), 2nd rev. ed., p. 281.

countryside are reinforced in studies of voter preferences: 'In predicting the Labour versus conservative vote', the chief factor is 'father's partisanship'.<sup>164</sup>

In his well-known survey of the standards of living of dairy farming families, W. T. Doig said that by its nature, dairying was a close-knit, family-centred enterprise.<sup>165</sup> Doig found that farmers' wives' membership in the Women's Institute, or in the Women's Division of the Farmers' Union, was only 15 percentage points lower than farmers' membership of the Farmers' Union.<sup>166</sup> These activities did not politicise rural women. Newspaper reports of both organisations' branch meetings in the Waikato district over the month preceding the 1935 general election contain not a single reference to politics.<sup>167</sup> Instead, meeting reports feature sponges and, for example, a competition for the 'best article made from a sugar bag' (a neat reminder of the tenor of the times).<sup>168</sup> Conversely, Farmers' Union branches in the same area were becoming increasingly politicised and membership was expanding rapidly.<sup>169</sup>

A further assumption in the database is that male electors were most likely to vote at their listed polling place on the roll. Three factors support this approach. Firstly, there is the writer's admittedly impressionistic view that rural electors doubtless had a degree of identification with 'their' polling place. Indeed, polling places in rural areas tended to be local landmarks such as schools or neighbours' houses.<sup>170</sup>

<sup>164</sup> Peter Aimer and Ian McAllister, 'Electoral Behaviour: Progress, Problems, and Prospects', in *Electoral Behaviour in New Zealand*, Martin Holland (ed.), (Oxford University Press, Auckland, 1992), p. 181. This, however, relates to the period 1987–90, but is likely to have been *at least* as relevant in contemporary rural New Zealand.

<sup>165</sup> W. T. Doig, *A Survey of Standards of Life of New Zealand Dairy Farmers*, Bulletin No.75, (Department of Scientific and Industrial Research, Wellington, 1940), p. 20, stressed the family nature of dairying. Hired (permanent) labour was employed on fewer than 18 percent of the 451 surveyed farms (p. 50). E. J. Fawcett, 'Dairy Farming', in *Agricultural Organization in New Zealand: A Survey of Land Utilization, Farm Organization, Finance and Marketing*, H. Belshaw *et al* (ed.), (Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, 1936), p. 448, for average farm areas in eight typical dairying counties in 1934. Horace Belshaw, 'Agricultural Labour in New Zealand', in *Agricultural Organization*, pp. 195–6, describes the development of small farming. Malone, 'The Rural Vote', p. 31, held that numbers employed on farms grew rapidly in the 1930s. Nevertheless, this increase did not change the family nature of the enterprise. For a sociologist's support, see David Bedggood, *Rich and Poor in New Zealand: A Critique of Class, Politics, and Ideology*, (George Allen and Unwin, Auckland, 1980), p. 39.

<sup>166</sup> Doig, *Survey*, pp. 63–4.

<sup>167</sup> *The Waikato Times*, 01 November to 29 November 1935.

<sup>168</sup> *The Waikato Times*, 02 November 1935, p. 3.

<sup>169</sup> *The Waikato Times*, 02 November 1935, p. 9.

<sup>170</sup> For example, the polling place in Scotchman's Valley (Waikato electorate) was 'Mr Alex Ramsay's house'.

Secondly, rural electorates in the 1930s had widely scattered polling places, relatively undeveloped roads, and few vehicles. Even in their heyday, railways barely penetrated the electorates in question. Dairy men still used horses for their deliveries.<sup>171</sup> On top of these factors, dairy farming was and is a time-consuming, seven-day operation. Voting outside one's listed polling place undoubtedly happened, but not to the systematic extent needed to distort this study's findings.

Two ambiguities arise when matching electoral rolls and election results. Election results list polling places for which there are no entries on the electoral roll. One assumes this simply means that names of localities used to register voters, and names of polling places, changed by the time of the election.<sup>172</sup> Votes from these polling places, typically less than five percent of the electorate total, were disregarded because the missing values in the occupational analysis would have distorted the correlation analyses. Conversely, some people on the roll—less than five percent—were listed at localities that did not correspond to polling place election results. It was impossible in some cases to determine at which polling place they would most likely have voted. Such roll entries were also discarded.

### *Choice of test cases*

Electorates with the most farmers should show most clearly the voting patterns claimed in the literature. As noted in the introduction, most farmers were small farmers by definition. In turn, 'small farmer' was synonymous with 'dairy farmer', and dairy farmers outnumbered sheep farmers by two to one. Moreover, we saw that dairying was a family-centred operation with little outside labour, so these smallholdings had higher concentrations of farmers. The task is, therefore, to select a representative number of dairy electorates. If the hypothesis that farmers voted Labour is robust, it will be most easily confirmed in electorates with high farmer densities. Conversely, if such electorates do not confirm the research hypothesis, then that hypothesis is severely, if not fatally, weakened.

As noted previously, the Labour Party won 22 of 39 rural and semi-rural electorates: 14 in the North Island and eight in the South Island. None of Labour's eight South Island electorates had extensive dairy farming areas. Dairying was present in various parts of the South Island, although on an eight-point measure of dairy cow density, Buller County rated highest in the South Island but only achieved level five (less than 20 cows per 100 acres),<sup>173</sup> well below North Island figures.

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<sup>171</sup> Watson, 'Rural Life', p. 177, citing *AJHR*, H-40, p. 38.

<sup>172</sup> In response to a query from this writer, the Electoral Commission could throw no light on this question.

<sup>173</sup> Fawcett 'Dairy Farming', p. 440. There were two very small areas with a level one rating: one was the Waimakiriri area north of and adjacent to Christchurch, the other was part of the coastal area of East Taieri, south of Dunedin. Fawcett identified Mataura, which included parts of Southland, Clutha and Tuapeka counties, as a dairying electorate, but it was won by McDougall (Independent), p. 49.

On the other hand, the 14 North Island rural Labour electorates—Labour’s new frontier—generally had intensive dairy farming. In the 1936 census, the top three regions by number of dairy cows were North Auckland, Auckland and Taranaki, with a total of 1 242 137. Unsurprisingly perhaps, these same three regions also had the top three densities of cows per 1 000 acres. Finally, again from the 1936 census, out of a national total 37 212 dairy farmers, Auckland province alone had 19 563 (52.6 percent).

Specific criteria for selecting electorates for study were numbers and density of dairy cows,<sup>174</sup> and E. J. Fawcett’s categorisation of ‘major dairying’ areas.<sup>175</sup> Other criteria for test case selection were a rural population assessed at more than 50 percent by the Representation Commission,<sup>176</sup> and, naturally, to have fielded a Labour candidate in 1935. The analysis also needed to include sufficient electorates for a reliable and authoritative test—deemed to be 10, or about two-thirds of the Labour-voting rural electorates in the North Island.

In any case, nine of the 14 voted in a Labour candidate, making selection simple. They were: Bay of Plenty, Hauraki, Manawatu, Marsden, Raglan, Tauranga, Thames, Waikato, and Waimarino. These electorates also represent Chapman’s electorate categories, with five ‘rural’, three ‘country-town’, one ‘balanced’ and three that were included in his ‘special country’ category.<sup>177</sup> Kaipara, Stratford and Patea electorates went to Nationalists in 1935, and Bay of Islands voted for the Country party. The remaining electorate, Egmont, went to an Independent candidate.

Were Labour-voting rural electorates also dairying electorates? Fawcett identified six of 11 North Island dairy electorates that went to Labour in 1935 as dairying areas. Fawcett and Cumberland also rated Tauranga, Manawatu and Waimarino electorates as candidate dairying areas. The 1936 census supports their view: Tauranga county reached eighth place by number of cows in milk, and Manawatu electorate included Horowhenua and Manawatu counties (in 12<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> place respectively). In addition, Manawatu county’s density of cows is a relatively high 4.8 on an eight-point scale.<sup>178</sup> Waimarino electorate makes an attractive candidate because its western flank was a dairying area, and it was the only North Island

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<sup>174</sup> See Kenneth B. Cumberland, *The Agricultural Regions of New Zealand*, (Clowes, London, 1948), p. 49, for dairy cows in milk.

<sup>175</sup> Fawcett, ‘Dairy Farming’, Map 24b, p. 440, noted above.

<sup>176</sup> A. D. McRobie, *New Zealand Electoral Atlas*, Wellington: GP Books, 1989, p. 87.

<sup>177</sup> Chapman, ‘Significance’, appendix. Chapman’s subsequent refinements to his typology—discussed in detail below—produce seven ‘farmer’ electorates and three ‘special country’ electorates out of the 10 cases in this thesis.

<sup>178</sup> Fawcett’s 1936 survey produces a national mean rating of 5.4 on an eight-point scale.

rural electorate with an incumbent Labour MP. Furthermore, Waimarino included parts of Fawcett's dairy counties of Stratford and Patea.

A tenth dairy electorate, which did not vote Labour but had a Labour candidate, controls for possible structural differences between Labour and non-Labour electorates. Egmont (87 percent rural) was preferred over Patea, Bay of Islands, Kaipara, Waitomo, and Stratford electorates because of its rural rating and its intensive dairying areas. In particular, Egmont included Waimate West, which easily surpassed the Hauraki Plains as the North Island's highest density dairying area.<sup>179</sup> The chosen 10 test cases, therefore, comprise Bay of Plenty, Egmont, Hauraki, Manawatu, Marsden, Raglan, Tauranga, Thames, Waikato and Waimarino.

### *Polling place voting and occupational profiles*

Percentages of the four occupational categories at each polling place produce an occupational profile of the electorate that bears very strongly on the election result. Occupational percentages were correlated with percentages of each party's vote. For example, in 1935, Waikato's polling place of Starr Town comprised 90.9 percent manuals (including a large contingent of miners), 1.8 percent white-collars, 5.5 percent farmers and 1.8 percent farm workers. The 1935 election result for Starr Town was Labour, 81.7 percent (of the valid vote); Nationalists, 14.8 percent; Country party, 0.8 percent; and Democrat party, 2.6 percent. Percentages are helpful in analysing polling places that varied greatly in voter numbers. Starr Town recorded 115 votes in 1935, 1.2 percent of the electorate vote.

Other Waikato polling places varied in size from Matahuru, the smallest with 28 votes (0.4 percent), to the largest, Cambridge, with 1 580 votes (16.3 percent).<sup>180</sup> The electorate correlations, calculated from the data of all polling places, provide a measure of association between the two variables across the electorate. Reliance on polling place data to generate electorate correlations overcomes the central problem of the Lipson-Chapman hypothesis: inferring farmers' voting behaviour from whole electorate voting figures.

The statistical technique used to correlate the two measures is Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficient, a measure of the intensity of association between two variables. In other words, the extent to which the occurrence of one variable is associated with the occurrence of another variable.<sup>181</sup>

<sup>179</sup> Waimate West had 466 dairy cows per 1 000 acres, and Hauraki Plains had 371 cows per 1 000 acres: *Agricultural and Pastoral Statistics*, 1933–34.

<sup>180</sup> This pattern of polling place size variation was found to be characteristic of rural, not urban electorates, and influenced the election results. See individual electorate analyses.

<sup>181</sup> See for example, Jerrold Zar, *Biostatistical Analysis*, (Prentice Hall, New Jersey, 1996), 3<sup>rd</sup> ed., p. 373. A further discussion of data protocols and statistical considerations is given in Appendix A.

Correlation coefficients may vary between  $-1.0$  (a perfect negative relationship: A is inversely associated with B), through zero (A and B are randomly associated) to  $1.0$  (a perfect positive relationship: A is always associated with B).<sup>182</sup> In its unqualified form, the major claim in the historiography—farmers voted for the Labour party—necessarily implies that higher proportions of farmers will be associated with higher proportions of Labour voting.

### *Ecological inference*

Inferences drawn from aggregate data to individual level behaviour are termed ecological. In the wider sense, 'an ecological study of electoral behaviour seeks to understand the interrelationships of political parties and voters with one another and with the social and legal environment in which they act.'<sup>183</sup>

However, as W. S. Robinson famously pointed out in 1950, ecological inference assumes a close correspondence between individual-level correlations and group-level correlations, when in fact there may be no correspondence at all.<sup>184</sup> This is the ecological fallacy, in which different entities occupy the same 'space' and are mistakenly believed, therefore, to possess some other characteristic in common. Notwithstanding Robinson's caveats, Ranney makes a case for the use of aggregate data, where the studies 'carefully and thoroughly identify and describe recurring patterns of preference ... and by ecological correlations, relate those patterns to other traits of the electorates.'<sup>185</sup>

In the New Zealand context, election results are relatively disaggregated—reported at polling place level—compared with electorate or county-level results that are the best available in many other situations. The polling place, Chapman's 'molecule of electoral action',<sup>186</sup> is the subject of enquiry. If polling place voting patterns change in a systematic, demonstrable way with changes in their occupational attributes, inferences are valid. This study does not seek to generalise beyond the voting behaviour of individual polling places, and therefore does not commit the ecological fallacy. Although conclusions

<sup>182</sup> Negative associations are also termed 'inverse'. Conventionally, only negative coefficients are reported with a directional (minus) sign. Any coefficient without a sign is thereby positive. In practice, correlations are always less than  $1.0$ ;  $0.67$  for example, so the zero is conventionally—and henceforth in this thesis—omitted for clarity;  $.67$  means the same as  $0.67$ . Statistical analysts refer to the *predominance* interpretation, which considers the extent by which the positive coefficient pattern predominates over the negative pattern (or vice versa): W. H. Foddy, *Elementary Applied Statistics for the Social Sciences*, (Harper and Row, Sydney, 1988), p. 139.

<sup>183</sup> Austin Ranney, 'The Utility and Limitations of Aggregate Data in the Study of Electoral Behaviour', in Ranney (ed.), *Essays on the Behavioural Study of Politics*, (University of Illinois Press, Urbana 1962), p. 93.

<sup>184</sup> W. S. Robinson, 'Ecological Correlations and the Behaviour of Individuals', *American Sociological Review*, Issue 15, 1950, pp. 351–357. Citing Robinson, researchers maintain that the ecological fallacy remains problematic, if under-appreciated in New Zealand historical research: Eric Beh, Irene Hudson and Linda Moore, unpublished abstract for seminar entitled 'Ecological Inference: A Discussion', Christchurch, University of Canterbury, 14 July, 2003.

<sup>185</sup> Ranney, 'The Utility and Limitations of Aggregate Data', in Ranney, ed., p. 100.

<sup>186</sup> Chapman, 'The Unusual Electorates' p. 204.

drawn will state that, for example, ‘farmers in Raglan voted for the X party’, this is shorthand for ‘polling place-level groups of farmers had a tendency to vote for the X party.’ In this case, ‘polling place-level groups of farmers’ can be generalised to ‘farmers’ without invoking the ecological fallacy.

This chapter ends by reformulating historiographical claims into hypotheses amenable to mass quantification. The introduction to the case studies will detail the methods used to test hypotheses 1–6. Analysis of Chapman’s electorate typology also appears at that point. Hypothesis 7 is general in nature, assessed using whole electorate data, and appears in the conclusion to the thesis. Hypothesis 8 is assessed in the conclusion to Chapter 14: The Waikato Electorate 1938.

*Hypothesis 1: the majority of farmers voted Labour (strong version); alternatively, Labour won because sufficient farmers combined with other voters (weak version).*

Historians appear to have used voting data for whole electorates to claim that farmers voted Labour. If a majority of male electors were farmers, it would be valid to attribute victory to them. The distinction between the strong and weak versions stems from the need to assess Chapman’s contentions: in particular, that farmers comprised two-thirds of the population of country towns; and that ‘farmer electorates’ had a ‘majority of the population living on farms’.<sup>187</sup>

The ‘weak version’ of hypothesis 3 suggests that a minority of farmers voted Labour, just enough to produce a Labour victory in concert with Labour’s traditional allies. This would be a useful fallback position for those making a broad claim that farmers supported Labour in 1935. Ironically, the ‘weak version’ depends upon there being substantial numbers of Labour-oriented workers in rural electorates generally. Historians have not made this case explicitly. Chapman’s six ‘special country’ electorates were an attempt to account for blue-collar workers in some rural areas; however, he did not substantiate this claim.

*Hypothesis 2: farm workers tended to vote Labour.*

This claim—a relatively minor one—is left in its general formulation. No one has suggested that farm workers were a sizeable minority. Condcliffe and Lipson merely included ‘farm worker’ as one of a number of diverse occupations in alliances that voted Labour.<sup>188</sup>

*Hypothesis 3: White-collar workers tended to vote Labour.*

Historiographical claims merely state ‘white-collar workers’—along the same lines as claims for farm workers—so this hypothesis follows the same form. Particular white-collar workers, the lower middle-

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<sup>187</sup> Chapman, noted above.

<sup>188</sup> Lipson, *Politics*, p. 231, Condcliffe, *Welfare State*, p. 58.

class voters, have often been considered well represented in the so-called 'floating voter' category. If true, we would expect to see a tendency to lower correlations between white-collars and party voting, whether Labour or not.<sup>189</sup>

*Hypothesis 4: minor party votes came disproportionately at the expense of Nationalist votes.*

We test the claim by analysing all minor party votes in the nine contests with three or more candidates. Thames is the only one of the nine cases with no Nationalist contender, so we take the conservative Independent vote as a proxy for the Nationalist vote. Correlations will reveal data patterns of all parties, so we will not be testing only whether the Nationalist vote suffered because third parties lured away their disenchanted voters.

The minor party culprit most often mentioned is the Democrat party, perhaps because Democrats took 7.8 percent of the vote nationally—overall, the largest minor party vote—but failed to win a seat. In any case, Democrats were the best represented of the minor parties, contesting eight of the 10 cases in this study. Nevertheless, the Country party was a strong presence where it appeared, contesting two of the electorates and defeating Democrat candidates on both occasions.

*Hypothesis 5: changes to the occupational profiles of rural electorates during the depression benefited the Labour party.*

Only one historian, Malone, argued that population change affected the election result.

We know the level of voter increases, but to link 'more voters' to 'more voters who voted Labour' requires proof that extra votes came from occupational categories that tended to align with the Labour party. Comparing the occupational composition of the general and supplementary sections of each electoral roll tests Malone's claim. Significant percentage increases in electoral roll numbers may, and probably did, affect the occupational profile of the electorate. That is, increases in electors probably occurred disproportionately across the four occupational categories. This is a straightforward measure, although results are not conclusive: the difference in composition of the respective sections of the electoral roll is not taken to be a definitive measure of—rather, a guide to—occupational profile change in an electorate between two elections. Fortunately, additional 1938 electoral roll analysis is available for Waikato, which can point to the reliability of the general-versus-supplementary roll method. Tentative results backed with a measure of their reliability are given for this hypothesis.

*Hypothesis 6: Labour-won polling places had larger vote increases than did Nationalist-won polling places.*

The thrust of Malone's argument is that polling places that showed a swing to Labour also showed large increases in votes. The nine electorates of this study contested in 1931 showed an average vote increase

<sup>189</sup> Absence of such a pattern, however, will not disprove the theory.



of 25.2 percent in 1935. Increases in votes—as we saw earlier—came from two sources: increases in electoral roll numbers and higher voter turnout. The turnout increase of the eight Labour electorates averaged 10.3 percent, and the electoral roll increases averaged 10.6 percent. At polling place level, it is not possible to distinguish between the two factors on available data. Nevertheless, some movement is possible: polling places that voted Labour in 1935 will be measured on the percentage change in the total vote from the 1931 election to the 1935 election. If Labour-won polling places have a higher average vote increase than do Nationalists', we have evidence that supports the hypothesis (even if we are unsure whether to credit increases in the electoral rolls or higher voter turnout).

*Hypothesis 7: the higher the proportion of an electorate's population assessed as rural by the Representation Commission, the more farmers that electorate would have had.*

This hypothesis tests the power of the Representation Commission's rural population assessment to predict proportions of farmers against other male occupations in rural electorates. The obvious consequence of hypothesis seven is that there should be a close correspondence between the percentage of the Representation Commission's rural dweller assessment and farmers as a proportion of male occupations. This hypothesis tests the general claim by comparing data across the 10 cases and findings appear in the thesis conclusion.

*Hypothesis 8: Labour's loss of 'butter seats' in 1938 was due to farmers withdrawing support.*

The 1938 election was the Labour party's zenith, after which a slow decline set in. Along the way, Labour lost most of its rural electorates in 1943, in a political application of a 'last on, first off' principle. It is less often remarked that Labour's rural seats started to drift away in 1938, when, despite an increase in the party's rural vote, it lost more electorates than it gained. Milne reaffirmed the convention that farmers were paramount in rural electorates, when he attributed Labour's loss of 'butter seats' to farmers' disappointment over the guaranteed price scheme.<sup>190</sup>

A comparison of the Labour voting correlations and occupational proportions in an electorate lost by Labour in 1938—Waikato—for both the 1935 and 1938 elections tests this hypothesis. The comparison indicates where Labour's occupational support resided in 1935, and in what ways that changed in 1938. Results for one electorate, albeit a typical 'butter seats', is not a conclusive test of the claim. The test does, however, provide a systematic quantitative evaluation of an otherwise unsupported claim, and suggests whether further work could be fruitful.

<sup>190</sup> Milne, *Political Parties*, pp. 54–55, 87. 'Several dairy seats' were apparently lost through Labour's broken promises concerning monetary reform: the 1938 guaranteed price was seen as too low by farmers, and export prices had improved by 1938.

## Part II: Case Studies

### Introduction

Part II contains in-depth analyses of the 10 test cases, taken in order of highest to lowest proportions of farmers. High farmer proportion electorates should reveal farmers' voting patterns most clearly. In particular, one expects to see higher Labour vote proportions to accompany higher proportions of farmers, given that the historiographical claims assert that farmers voted Labour.

The nine Labour-voting cases are dealt with first, followed by Egmont, the contrast case of a dairying electorate that voted conservative in 1935. Each case is analysed in a broadly similar manner; characteristics unique to a particular electorate are treated on a case-by-case basis. An introductory section briefly describes the electorate, noting any electoral peculiarities evident in previous elections.

The analysis itself opens with 1935 voting data, in particular highlighting voting profiles—the distribution of party votes across the spectrum of the electorate polling places. The term 'spectrum' is used advisedly, because these 'rural' electorates range from large urban centres with up to four individual polling places, to small localities in the rural hinterland with just a few votes. The larger polling places contributed 20 percent or more of electorate votes.

Each analysis then investigates occupational data from the electoral roll. Here, differences in polling place numbers of votes—the 'larger' and 'smaller' polling places—finds a correlate in varying proportions within and between occupational categories. Three measures discussed so far—party vote, occupational profile, and share of the electorate vote—are combined within a bubble chart for each polling place.<sup>191</sup>

Farmers were present in significant numbers in the larger urban centres in these electorates, but generally constituted a minority of the male occupations. Farmers started to dominate in occupational terms as the

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<sup>191</sup> A bubble chart is a scatter graph where the relative size of the data points (or 'bubbles') representing the polling places indicates the relative share of electorate votes at that polling place. As a scatter plot, it also confirms linearity of the data—explained in Appendix A.

polling areas became smaller and ever more rural. Manual workers tended to outnumber the other three occupational categories in the largest urban areas, although manuals occurred throughout these electorates in varying proportions. White-collar workers were localised in urban areas, where they sometimes outnumbered farmers, and were found only in very small numbers in rural areas. This was expected, given that white-collar workers were heavily associated with secondary and service industries, which were predominantly associated with urban areas. Farm workers occurred in surprising numbers in urban areas, suggesting that one needs to be wary of assuming that farm workers lived on farms and necessarily were politically influenced by farmers due to their close proximity.

The voting profile and the occupational profile of each electorate are presented graphically. Firstly, the analysis highlights the largest five or so polling places—the number varies from electorate to electorate—whose votes comprise more than 50 percent of the electorate vote. Voting in this group of polling places was sometimes a vital component of Labour's electoral performance in 1935. Those largest polling places were urban by definition, in the sense that they comprised the areas of the electorate containing the largest concentrations of population.

Secondly, by way of contrast, an equivalent number of polling places is drawn from the other end of the polling place spectrum—those small rural areas with just a few voters. Although these areas exerted very little electoral influence, their characteristics inform the analysis of the electorate as a whole. Thirdly, in electorates that contained large numbers of polling places,<sup>192</sup> a number of polling places equivalent to the largest and smallest groups is drawn from the median-size areas to ascertain what was happening in the 'middle ground' polling places of the electorate.

Following the voting and occupational analysis, the two measures are correlated to identify systematic patterns of association at polling place level between party votes and occupational categories. Not accounted for by this process is the huge variation in polling place numbers of votes, because the correlation algorithm uses percentages. Accordingly, the bubble chart represents major data to highlight the vote share of the various polling places, as well as whether they comprise predominantly farmers or manuals; Labour or Nationalist votes.

Having established patterns of voting behaviour in the 1935 election, each case study seeks to explain those behaviours. Firstly, we investigate population changes in the period prior to the 1935 election. Since, as previously noted, electorate boundaries applied for the three general elections of 1928, 1931, and 1935, these comparisons are based on changes in electoral roll numbers across this seven-year period,

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<sup>192</sup> As previously noted, the electorates in this study contained between 33 polling places (Manawatu) and 91 polling places (Bay of Plenty and Waimarino), with a median of 52.

as well as changes in census data between 1926 and 1936.<sup>193</sup> Most population change will be found to occur towards the latter part of the period, that is, from 1931 to 1935. Occupational profiles differ between the General and Supplementary Rolls of the test cases and these differences are tracked at polling place level.<sup>194</sup> The four male occupational categories are unevenly represented in electoral roll changes, indicating their mobility during the depression. Since the four occupational categories tend to be associated with a particular political party, we obtain a measure of the parties' relative electoral advantage, or disadvantage, due to population changes.

Voter turnout in the test cases generally fell between 1928 and 1931 then rose to a new high in 1935. As seen in chapter 2 Historiography, some claims were made for a relationship between voter turnout and party vote. This thesis illuminates the question: the change from 1931 to 1935 in the number of votes cast at a given polling place is correlated with its occupational profile. This shows that a particular occupational category, already identified as tending to associate with a certain party's vote, was disproportionately represented at polling places where the largest changes occurred.<sup>195</sup>

### ***Chapman's typology and the Representation Commission's definition of rural population***

We noted earlier that Chapman's influential electorate typology used an urban–rural polarity featuring farmers. To recapitulate briefly, the most rural electorates, in Chapman's view, were 'dominated by farmers',<sup>196</sup> and were 'in the countryside of farmers and small townsmen'.<sup>197</sup> Chapman 'would emphasize that farmers are normally at least two in every three of the population' in his 'country-towns'.<sup>198</sup> His typology classified as 'farmer' those electorates with 'a clear majority living on farms'.<sup>199</sup>

Chapman's claims turn upon Hypothesis 7 from the Methodology chapter: the higher the proportion of an electorate's population assessed as rural by the Representation Commission, the more farmers that electorate would have had. The data of figure II–1 test this hypothesis: can the Representation Commission's rural population assessment predict proportions of farmers against other male occupations

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<sup>193</sup> Robust comparison is furthered by the fact that the 1935 election was held at the end of 1935 (28 November).

<sup>194</sup> Chapter 3 Methodology details the differences in composition between the two sections of the electoral rolls.

<sup>195</sup> Although electorate boundaries remained static between 1928 and 1935, the complement of polling places varied. Additions and deletions—although affecting only a small minority of polling places—are noted in each case.

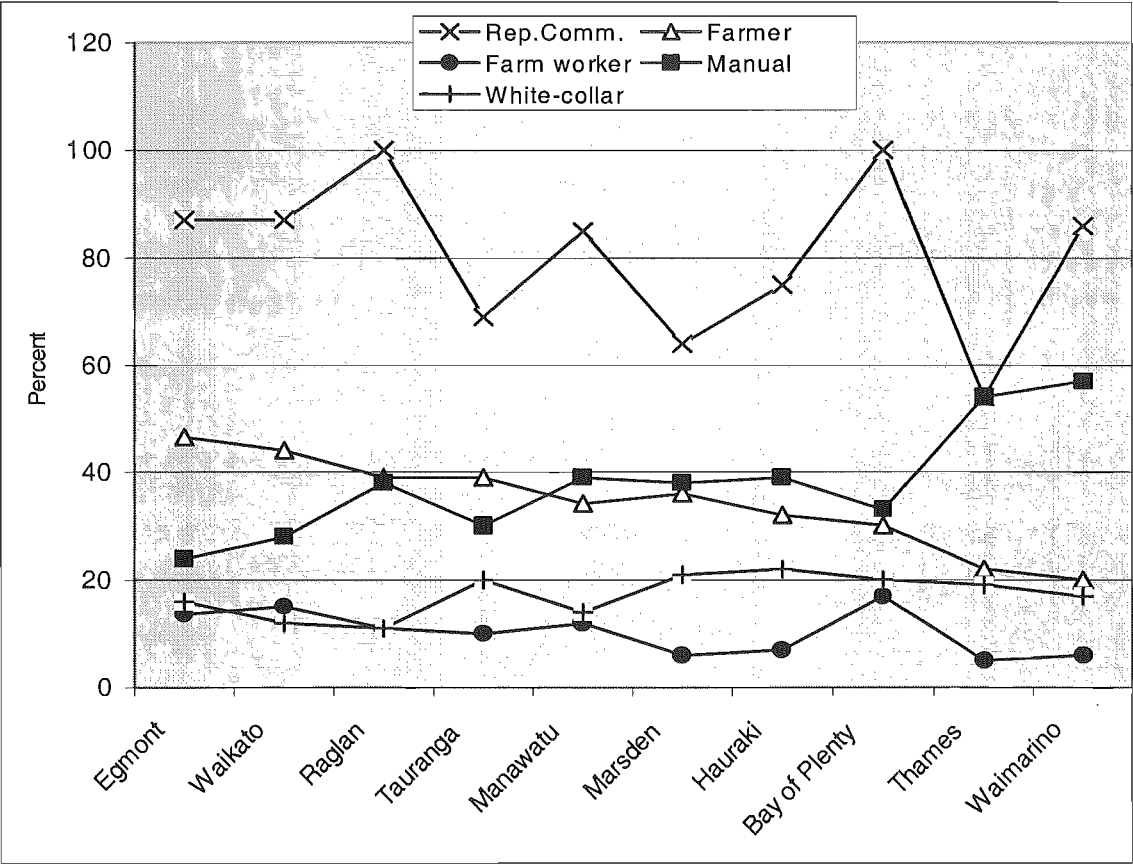
<sup>196</sup> Chapman, 'From Labour to National', p. 354. These references repeated for convenience.

<sup>197</sup> Chapman, *The Political Scene*, p. 19.

<sup>198</sup> Chapman, 'The Significance of the 1928 General Election', footnote to p. 147.

<sup>199</sup> Chapman, 'The Response to Labour', p. 227.

Figure II-1: Comparison between Four Male Occupational Categories as Percentages of Electoral Roll and Percentage of Each Electorate Deemed to be Rural Residents, Set Against Chapman's Electorate Typology, 10 Rural Electorates 1935



	Eg.	Waik.	Rag.	Taur.	Man.	Mars.	Haur.	B o P.	Tham.	Waim.	mean
Chap. 1948 <sup>200</sup>	R	R	R	C-T	C-T	R	C-T	R	Bal.	R	n/a
Chap. 1963 <sup>201</sup>	F	F	S.C.	F	F	F	F	F	S.C.	S.C.	n/a
Rep. Comm.	87	87	100	69	85	64	75	100	54	86	81
Farmer	46.5	44.2	39.7	39.5	35.6	35.2	31.7	30.3	22.1	20.2	34
Farm worker	13.6	15.5	10.7	10.1	11.5	5.6	6.8	16.5	4.7	5.7	10
Manual	23.9	28.4	38.6	30.3	38.2	38.4	39.4	33.1	53.9	56.7	38
White-collar	16.0	12.0	11.0	20.1	14.7	22.1	22.1	20.1	19.3	17.4	17
Occ. total	100	100.1	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	n/a

Electorate key: R = rural, F = farmer, S.C. = special country, C-T = country-town, Bal. = balanced

<sup>200</sup> Chapman, 'Significance', appendix.

<sup>201</sup> Chapman, 'Response', p. 278.

in rural electorates? The obvious consequence of hypothesis seven is that there should be a preferably close or otherwise predictable correspondence between the percentage of the Representation Commission's rural dweller assessment, and farmers as a proportion of male occupations.

Firstly, the figure shows only a tenuous relationship between the Representation Commission's assessment of the percentage of rural dwellers against actual proportions of farmers: 34 percent farmers is no match for a mean 81 percent rural population. The difference between the two measures is 47 percentage points. Even with the addition of farm worker proportions to those of farmers, the average difference is still 37 percentage points.<sup>202</sup>

Secondly, the relationship between the two measures is too variable to use the rural rating as a compensatory mechanism and still be able to predict farmer proportions reliably. In five cases (Egmont, Waikato, Tauranga, Marsden, and Thames), farmer percentages fall within 10 percentage points of rural population percentages. In the other five cases, however, differentials vary between 11.6 and 45.6 percentage points. Nor is it any help to combine farmers and farm workers: differentials between the combination of farmers and farm workers, and rural population percentages, range from 23 to 60 percentage points.

Restricting the strategy to Chapman's 'farmer' electorates—'special country' electorates were more variable—merely reduces the differential range from 37 percentage points to 30 percentage points. In this group of 10 rural electorates, the Representation Commission's rural population percentage cannot predict percentages of farmers with acceptable reliability, and if used in this way will tend to overestimate farmer numbers.

The findings—that farmer numbers were much lower than has often been supposed—carry additional weight because the 10 electorates were chosen for their high farmer densities. It seems unlikely, therefore, that any other rural electorate will reach the majority of farmers postulated by Chapman for his 'farmer' electorates.

In separating out his 'special country' electorates, Chapman deserves credit for noting variations in numbers of manual workers (other than farm workers) in rural areas. His electorate typology was intended to facilitate explanations of the voting behaviour in rural electorates, but the classification did not find much commonality in the three examples from this study (there were altogether six such electorates in 1935). Chapman marked out these electorates for their miners, timber workers, or railway

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<sup>202</sup> There is no sound theoretical reason to aggregate farmer and farm worker proportions in this way; the point here is simply that even if there were sound reasons, the results would be disappointing.

workers; but did not mention that non-special-occupation manuals easily outnumbered them. Variability is seen with other occupations in these three cases: white-collars in Thames (19.3 percent) were almost double their proportion in Raglan (11.0 percent); however, Raglan's farm workers (10.7 percent) were more than double those in Thames (4.7 percent). Thames (22.1 percent) and Waimarino (20.1 percent) had the smallest proportions of farmers, but Raglan (39.7 percent) had more farmers than the median of the 10 cases (35.4 percent).

In all fairness, Chapman made no claim for particular proportions of farmers in his 'special country' electorates—one cannot test a claim for electorates with 'a *large number* of labourers ... combined with *some proportion* of farmers'<sup>203</sup>—but the implication is that 'special country' electorates were rural electorates with, atypically, high proportions of manual workers in non-farming occupations. In this thesis, two of the three 'special country' electorates (Thames and Waimarino) had more manuals than they did farmers but one (Raglan) did not. Further research would be needed, however, to establish conclusively the validity or otherwise of Chapman's 'special country' categorisation.

The Representation Commission's rural population percentages are even less useful in estimating percentages of manual workers—who, incidentally, outnumbered farmers in a majority of cases—because variability in manual percentages is greater than that of farmers. In addition, the plot unexpectedly shows that each of these farming electorates had more white-collar workers than farm workers.<sup>204</sup> Moreover, the median proportion of white-collars (18.4 percent) was more than half the median proportion of farmers (35.4 percent). The Commission's definition suited the purpose for which it was conceived—the implementation of the country quota—but has proven neither a guide to actual numbers or proportions of farmers, nor to numbers or proportions of other occupational categories. Consequently, hypothesis 7—the higher the proportion of an electorate's population assessed as rural-dwellers by the Representation Commission, the more farmers the electorate would have had—is falsified.

We recall that Chapman refined his typology to test his theory—'parallelism of opinion'—that different voter sections across the country have polled in parallel with each other, and have thus exercised a national judgement on governmental performance. If two of Chapman's electorate categories prove to have such variable characteristics, then Chapman's entire theory is compromised.

### *Minor party voting*

Frequent claims in the literature concerned the effects of minor party voting on Labour's victory in the 1935 election. The claims were, firstly, that minor parties carved out votes from their own (conservative)

<sup>203</sup> Emphasis added.

<sup>204</sup> This may not have applied, for example, in the sprawling South Island sheep farming electorates: as previously noted, contemporary dairy farming employed fewer farm workers.

side. By splitting the conservative vote, minor parties gave Labour a victory by default. The second question concerns the number of seats allegedly affected. Could it be true that Labour benefited to the extent of 10 to 12 extra seats in Parliament? As far as the nine Labour-voting cases of this study are concerned,<sup>205</sup> there is a *prima facie* case to answer: in six of the nine cases votes for the largest-polling minor party exceeded Labour's winning margin. Moreover, in some cases there were five contenders for the electorate, adding further weight to the claim. The votes of four candidates<sup>206</sup> are plotted on a graph where the data are ordered by decreasing polling place vote numbers. For present purposes, whole electorate data is presented in Figure II-2.

Firstly, we see that the three 'special country' electorates gave Labour a sufficient buffer that the minor party(ies) were unable to bridge. In the six 'farmer' electorates, however, the Labour margin falls below the third candidate's vote, and in two cases (Manawatu and Tauranga) the Labour margin also falls below the fourth candidate's vote. More information is needed before we can safely say that Nationalists lost votes that went to minor parties.

Figure II-2 shows that, as the third-party vote rises, the trendline of the Labour vote data points declines more steeply than that of the Nationalists'. In other words, Nationalists maintained their vote share better than did Labour in the face of a rising third (and fourth) party vote. Nationalist votes declined by eight percentage points across the nine electorates, whereas Labour declined by 24 percentage points. Detailed information is gleaned from the analyses of the test cases to establish the principal beneficiary of the minor party vote. The examination of each case concludes by listing the research hypotheses and summarising the results for that case.

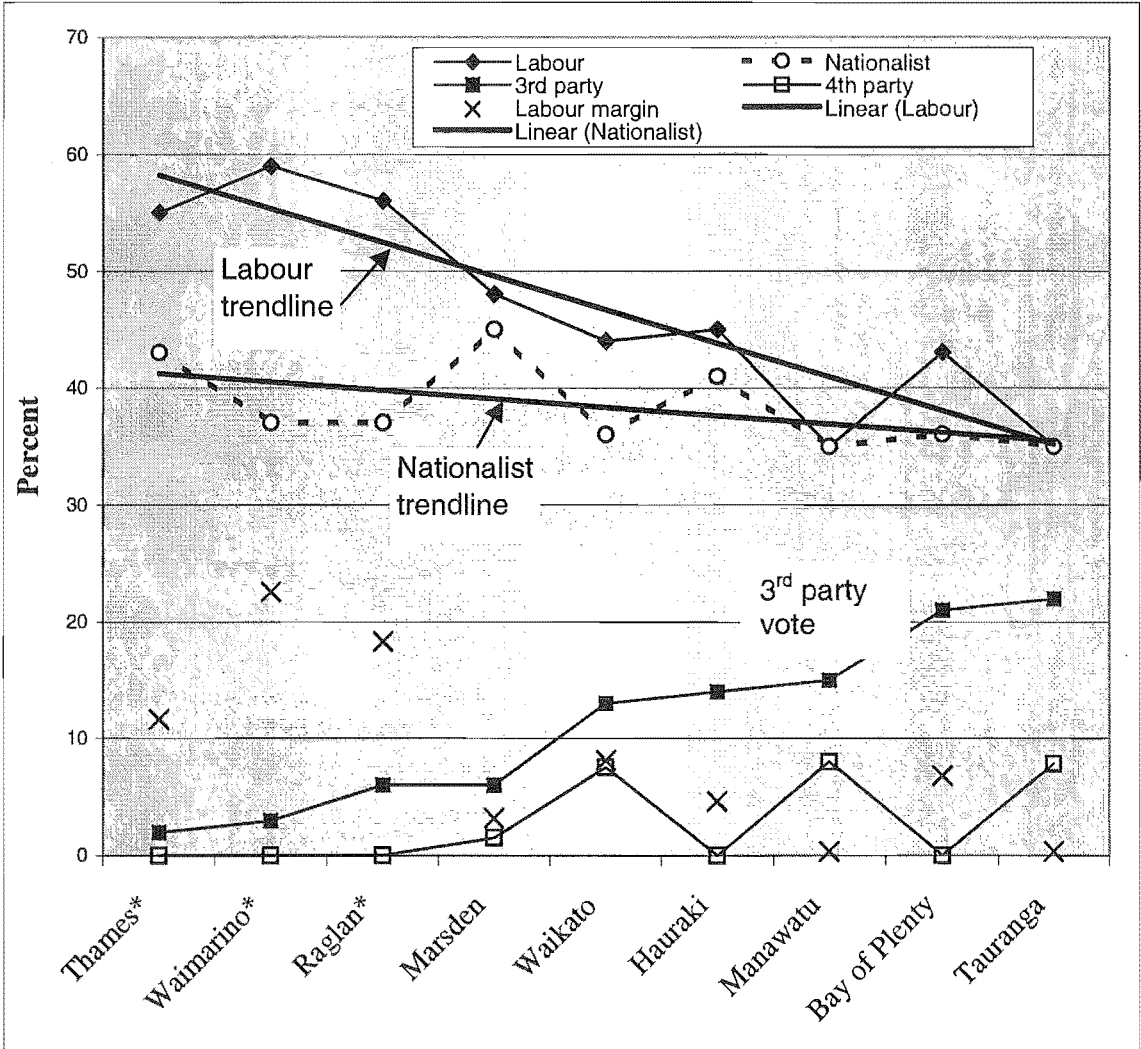
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<sup>205</sup> The Egmont electorate was a two-cornered contest.

<sup>206</sup> There were five candidates in Manawatu and Tauranga electorates. In Manawatu the fifth candidate amassed 7.3 percent, almost matching the fourth candidate. Both fourth and fifth candidates in Manawatu easily exceeded Labour's tiny margin of 0.34 percentage points. In Tauranga, the fifth candidate took just 53 votes but surpassed Labour's margin of 35 votes.



Figure II-2: Percentage of Labour, Nationalist, Minor Party Votes, and Labour Vote Margin, Nine Rural Electorates 1935



\* denotes 'special country' electorates (see text).

## Chapter 4: The Waikato Electorate 1935

### *Introduction*

Waikato, a major dairying electorate with 87 percent of its population living in rural areas, featured two large urban centres—Cambridge and Morrinsville—that together contributed more than one-third of electorate votes. Pockets of miners also featured, but were too few to make an electoral impact, and Chapman did not consider Waikato a ‘special country’ electorate.<sup>207</sup>

The electorate experienced major population changes between the censuses of 1926 and 1936. This was particularly evident in Waikato’s rural areas, where the population of counties increased by 28.3 percent against a 16.8 percent increase in boroughs. Waikato’s population changes occurred mainly in the latter part of the depression: registered electors rose 0.6 percent between 1928 and 1931, but soared 19.4 percent between 1931 and 1935. The extent of voter increases raises questions about the occupational profile of the electorate, and whether that changed to the benefit of one party more than others.

### *Voting analysis*

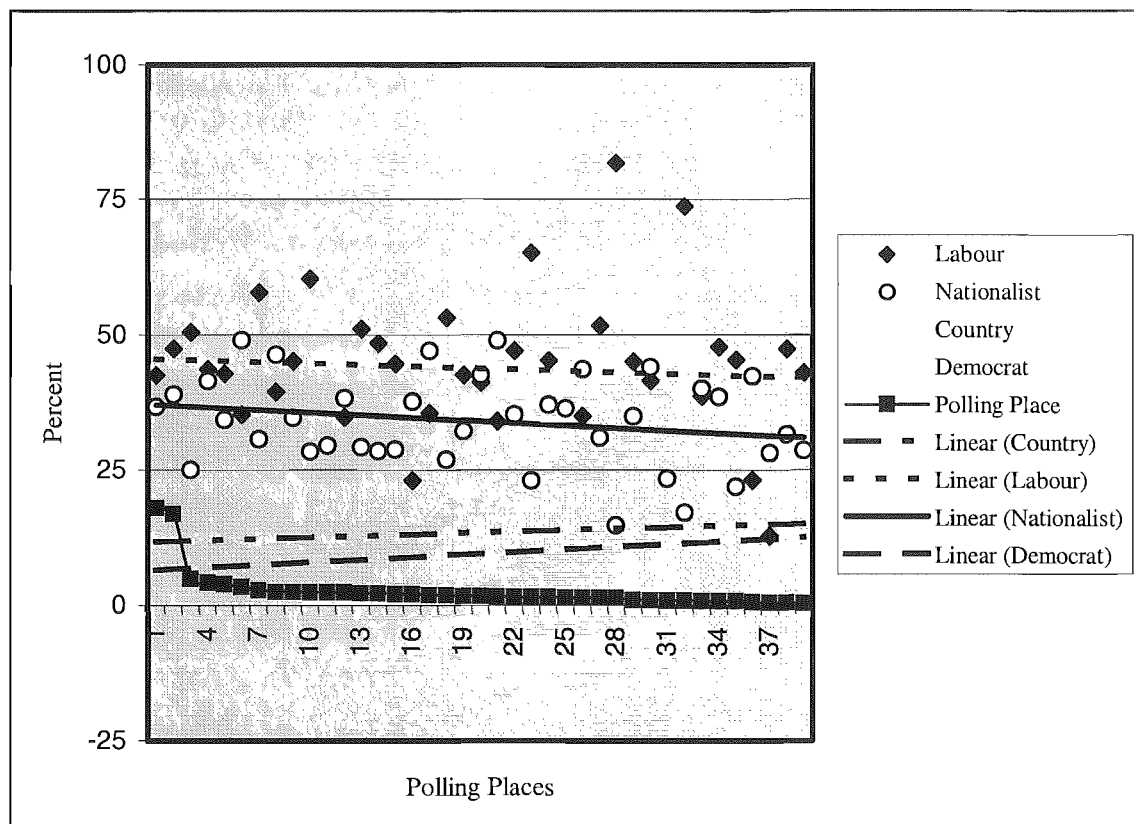
The 1931 election had been a two-way contest between two conservative candidates, F. Lye (Coalition) and S. N. Ziman (Independent). The Coalition won with 56.8 percent of the valid vote. In 1935, in a departure from its usual conservative vote, Waikato elected a Labour MP. The four candidates were: H. E. Annett (Democrat), who took 7.4 percent of the valid vote; Ziman (now Country party), who took 12.6 percent; Lye (now Nationalist), who took 35.9 percent; and R. Coulter (Labour), who took the seat with 44.0 percent. Coulter’s margin was 784 votes, or 8.1 percent of the valid vote. The combined minor party share of 20 percent was large enough to prove decisive, providing, of course, that ‘lost’ votes disadvantaged one party more than the others.

Figure 4–1 plots the party vote share as well as the polling place vote share. Trend lines (‘Linear’) indicate that Labour and Nationalists polled relatively higher at

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<sup>207</sup> There were 85 miners mostly found at Kimihia, where there was an equivalent number of farmers, and Starr Town, where there were practically no farmers.

**Figure 4-1: Polling Places by Percentage of Party Vote and Decreasing Percentage of Electorate Vote, Waikato Electorate 1935 (N = 39)**



Note: Country party and Democratic party data points are omitted for clarity. Trend lines are more important for present purposes.

larger polling places, while Country party and Democrat candidates polled higher at rural polling places (although the latter two candidates each won only one polling place). Of 44 listed polling places,<sup>208</sup> Labour won 25 and drew one with Nationalists. Country party and Democrats each won a single polling place, with Nationalists taking the balance of 16. In line with Labour's plurality win, only nine of its 25 polling places were won by majority, reflecting limits to Labour's electorate-wide acceptance.

Nevertheless, as polling places became smaller and more rural, Labour extended its lead slightly over Nationalists, as shown by the widening gap between trend lines. In the same areas, Labour lost ground against minor parties, whose trend lines rise while Labour's falls (although not to the same extent as that of Nationalists).

<sup>208</sup> With no listings on the electoral roll, the database excludes River Rd (57 votes), Goodwood (129 votes), and Mangawara (42 votes), as well as the two new polling places of Grattons Rd (95 votes), and Whitikahu (78 votes); total excluded: 401 votes (4.1 percent).

In rural areas, the Democrat reduced some of the deficit against the Country party. The contrary slopes of Labour and Nationalist against Country and Democrat trend lines suggests that both major parties lost votes to minor parties, but that Nationalists fared worse because their trend line fell further.

Notwithstanding considerable variation between individual polling places, Labour's reception across the electorate was fairly even—shown by a dotted trend line with only a slight downward gradient. Smaller polling places tended to show greater variation between Labour and Nationalist votes although the tendency was not very pronounced—only four of 39 polling places exceeded a 40 percentage point vote difference; others fell within a range of minus 20 to plus 31.8 percentage points. Nine Labour-won polling places exceeded the Nationalist vote by 20 percentage points or more, whereas Nationalists could exceed the Labour vote by 20 percentage points at only one polling place.

### *Occupational profile*

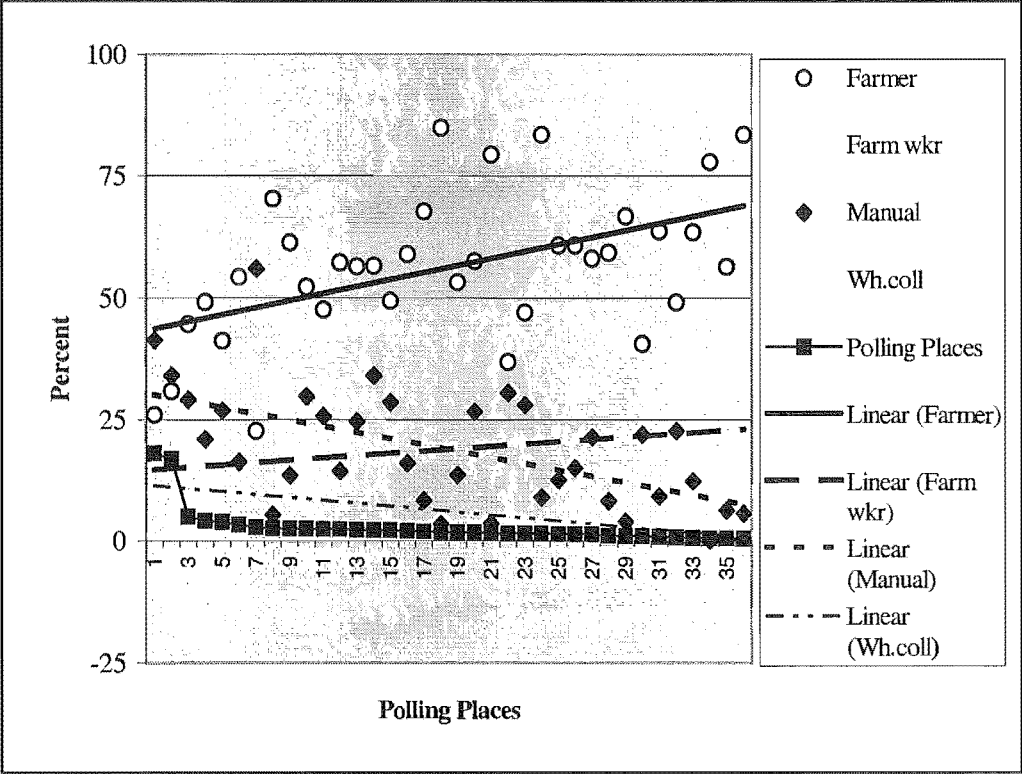
Figure 4–2 plots polling places by proportions of each of the four male occupational categories and by proportion of the total electorate vote. The occupational profile of the electorate was 44.2 percent farmers, 15.5 percent farm workers, 28.4 percent manuals, and 12.0 percent white-collars. These proportions differed from polling place to polling place, as the plot demonstrates. Labour's three top polling places (with an average vote for Labour of 46.8 percent) averaged 59.8 percent manuals and 27.6 percent farmers. Conversely, Nationalists top three polling places (with an average vote for the Nationalists of 33.5 percent) averaged 5.2 percent manuals and 73.5 percent farmers—suggesting that Labour was the recipient of more farmer votes than National was of manual votes. In smaller polling places, average manual proportions dipped by 10 percentage points, but average farmer proportions gained only eight percentage points.

The scatter plot at Figure 4–3 identifies principal Labour and Nationalist data, as well as farmer and manual data. Each polling place is measured by percentage point difference between Labour and Nationalist voting, and by percentage point difference between farmer and manual proportions. The trend line shows that increasing proportions of Nationalist votes were associated with increasing proportions of farmers. The electorate's defining characteristic is that the quadrant with the most polling places had more farmers than manuals, as well as more Labour than Nationalist votes. This suggests that a proportion of farmers voted Labour, sufficient to give the party a majority.

As the plot is based on percentages, it can take no account of numbers of votes. Nor can the plot register minor party voting. A polling place with more farmers than manuals, and more Labour than Nationalist votes, should not be taken to imply that most of those farmers necessarily voted Labour. Farmers voting

for a third party instead of Nationalists would have benefited Labour. This point is developed in the correlation analysis and minor party voting sections below.

**Figure 4-2: Polling Places by Decreasing Electorate Vote Share and Percentages of Four Male Occupational Categories, Waikato Electorate 1935 (N = 39)**

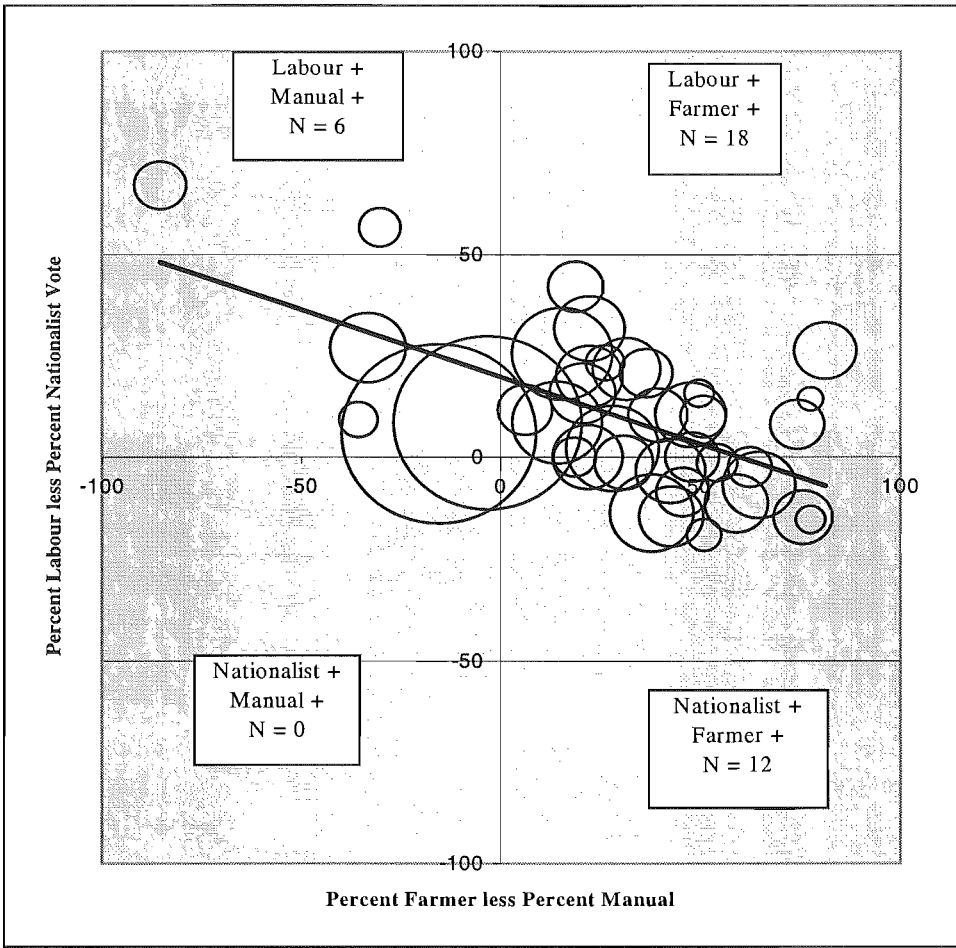


Note: Data points for farm workers and white-collar workers are omitted for clarity.

The contrast between Waikato’s urban and rural voting is evident in a comparison of the six largest and six smallest polling places. The largest six constituted just over half (50.9 percent) of electorate votes.<sup>209</sup> In these polling places, farmers (1 193) and manuals (1 078) were enrolled in broadly similar numbers. We expect white-collar proportions to be highest in urban areas and so it proves: there were 18 percent more white-collars (579) than farm workers (488). Compared with farmers at electorate level, who had a correlation of  $-.49$ , urban-dwelling farmers were less opposed to Labour, with a correlation of  $-.39$ . This change is commensurate with dilution of farmer proportions by manuals and white-collars. Also slightly reduced was an urban farmer correlation with Nationalist voting of  $.32$  (compared with  $.38$  overall). Both in their opposition to Labour and in their support for Nationalists, urban-dwelling farmers were less consistent than rural-dwelling farmers..

<sup>209</sup> The six largest polling places were: Cambridge (17.9 percent of the vote), Morrinsville (16.9 percent), Waitoa (4.9 percent), Taupiri (4.1 percent), Matangi (3.9 percent), and Waihou (3.3 percent).

**Figure 4-3: Polling Places by Percent Farmer less Percent Manual, and Percent Labour less Percent Nationalist Vote, Waikato Electorate 1935 (N = 39)**



In contrast, the group of six smallest polling places, with 3.2 percent of the electorate votes, presents a very different occupational profile.<sup>210</sup> Rural-dwelling farmers outnumbered manuals by more than two-to-one; rural farm workers outnumbered white-collars by more than three-to-one.<sup>211</sup> Rural-dwelling farmers had a negative association of  $-.32$  with Nationalists, and a positive association of about the same strength ( $.35$ ) with the Country party. These data explain the plot at figure 4-1, where we saw the Nationalist voting trend line fall in rural reaches of the electorate, while trend lines for third parties rose.

Farm workers in the most urban areas showed positive correlations with Nationalists, and negative correlations with Labour, that were similar to their overall electorate correlation. Farm workers had a smaller correlation ( $.20$  instead of  $.41$ ) with the Country party, but like rural farmers at the six smallest

<sup>210</sup> The six smallest polling places were: HopuHopu, (0.7 percent); Piako, (0.7); Te Miro, (0.6); Scotchman's Valley, (0.4); Karapiro, (0.4); and Matahuru (0.3).

<sup>211</sup> There were only 10 white-collars in total at the smallest six polling places.

polling places, farm workers correlated negatively ( $-.33$ ) with Nationalists and positively with the Country party ( $.49$ ). In this respect, farm workers allied strongly with farmers, not with manuals or with white-collars. Rural farm workers' negative association with Labour weakened to  $-.12$ , but this still compromises the orthodoxy that farm workers voted Labour.

Manual workers were hardly a homogenous voting section either. Although urban manuals correlated negatively with the Nationalists ( $-.49$ ), rural manuals at the six smallest polling places had a positive correlation ( $.33$ ). As we saw when farmer proportions were diluted in urban areas, the dilution of manual proportions in rural areas was accompanied by weaker correlations with Labour. Rural white-collars correlated positively with the Nationalists ( $.47$ ), but maintained a positive association with Labour ( $.36$ ), and a negative association with the Country party ( $-.45$ ). White-collars' small numbers in rural areas mitigated the electoral effect.

To sum up the voting differences, in the rural areas there was a swing away from the Nationalists and towards the Country party. This was double jeopardy for Nationalists—in-fighting between the conservative parties directly benefited Labour. If we disregard data from Kimihia, where miners skewed the occupational profile, Labour's total at the smallest six polling places was 78 votes—the same number as the Nationalists<sup>212</sup>—showing that rural areas in this electorate were delicately balanced, not stocked with Labour-voting farmers.

### *Correlations and split votes*

Table 4–1 sets out correlations between occupational category proportions and party vote proportions, revealing that farmers associated positively with conservative, not Labour voting. Farmers' correlation with Nationalists ( $.38$ ) was weakened by a positive association with the Country party ( $.31$ ) that was of

**Table 4–1: Polling Place Correlations between Proportions of Party Votes and Proportions of Four Male Occupational Categories, Waikato Electorate 1935 (N = 39)**

	<i>Labour</i>	<i>Nationalist</i>	<i>Country</i>	<i>Democrat</i>
Farmer	$-.49$	$.38$	$.31$	$.06$
Farm worker	$-.52$	$.27$	$.41$	$.15$
Manual	$.68$	$-.51$	$-.38$	$-.15$
White-collar	$.10$	$-.05$	$-.27$	$.05$

<sup>212</sup> Country party 43 votes; Democrats 23.

almost the same magnitude. Although farmers' positive association with Democrat proportions is too small for substantive analysis, the table shows that farmers associated positively with all three conservative candidates. Vote-splitting potential is evident from the combined conservative vote of 56 percent.

Farm workers' strongest positive correlation was with conservative protest voting (a correlation of .41 with the Country party), but they also had a weak positive correlation with the alternative conservative protest party (a correlation of .15 with Democrats). Farm workers helped to split the conservative vote on all fronts, further compromising Nationalists' fortunes. Waikato data support claims that third-party voting was decisive. Nationalists' main supporters, farmers and farm workers—with an emphatic proportional superiority in the electorate—correlated positively with minor parties.

Waikato's manuals correlated quite strongly with Labour and negatively with the other three parties: an opposite pattern to that of farmers and farm workers. Manuals, therefore, showed no evidence of systematic vote splitting; unlike farmers and farm workers. White-collar correlations were weak except for a low negative correlation with the Country party. Differing allegiances of farmers, manuals, and white-collars refute any suggestion of a voting alignment between them, as claimed in the historiography. Farm workers, for their part, aligned with farmers and conservative voting, not with manuals and Labour voting.

### *Population change*

As noted in the historiography, Malone claimed that 'Wherever there was a substantial swing to Labour in the country there was a noticeable increase in the number of voters.' Waikato electorate data is particularly suitable to test Malone's claim, since his research involved the Waikato region.<sup>213</sup> The first test measures changes in raw voting numbers between 1931 and 1935 at Nationalist and Labour-won polling places, without reference to occupation. The average increase in votes per polling place was 35 percent, ranging from 108 percent to minus 27 percent (only two polling places recorded fewer votes in 1935).

Figure 4–4 plots the polling places by party allegiance and by percentage vote change between 1931 and 1935. Labour-won polling places had larger vote increases (with a mean 35.5 percent increase) than did Nationalist-won polling places (with a mean 32.8 percent increase). The Nationalist average, however, was dragged up by the polling place of Springdale—won by only 7 votes, in any case—with a 108 percent increase, roughly double the next largest vote increase of 58 percent in Elstow. Labour's average, on the other hand, was dragged down by two polling places that showed losses (Leamington and

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<sup>213</sup> This was not the same thing as the Waikato electorate per se.



Gordonton), and by one that showed no change (Matahuru). Removing all four ‘rogue’ polling places gives a Nationalist median increase of 23.9 percent against a Labour median increase of 36.9 percent. Labour-voting polling places had larger increases in voters than Nationalist-voting ones; therefore, the first test supports Malone’s contention.

The second test—using polling place data from the 1935 election alone—establishes that the polling places Labour won were larger, on average, than those won by Nationalists.<sup>214</sup> The polling places are grouped by overall party allegiance—Labour or Nationalist—and each polling place’s share of total electorate votes calculated. By this measure, Labour-won polling places had an average 2.9 percent share of the electorate vote, whereas those won by Nationalists had an average 1.6 percent share of the electorate vote.

**Table 4–2: Differences between 1931 and 1935 Electoral Rolls across Four Male Occupational Categories at Labour and Nationalist-won Polling Places, Waikato Electorate 1935**

	24 Labour-won polling places Total vote 6 687		12 Nationalist-won polling places Total vote 2 222	
	Polling place average change (percent)	Net change (number)	Polling place average change (percent)	Net change (number)
Farmer	8.6	206	8.4	101
Farm worker	9.7	233	8.5	102
Manual	14.3	344	0.8	10
White-collar	2.6	63	–1.0	–12
Total	35.2	846	16.7	201

Note: Data exclude five polling places, either not present in both rolls, or without electoral roll entries.

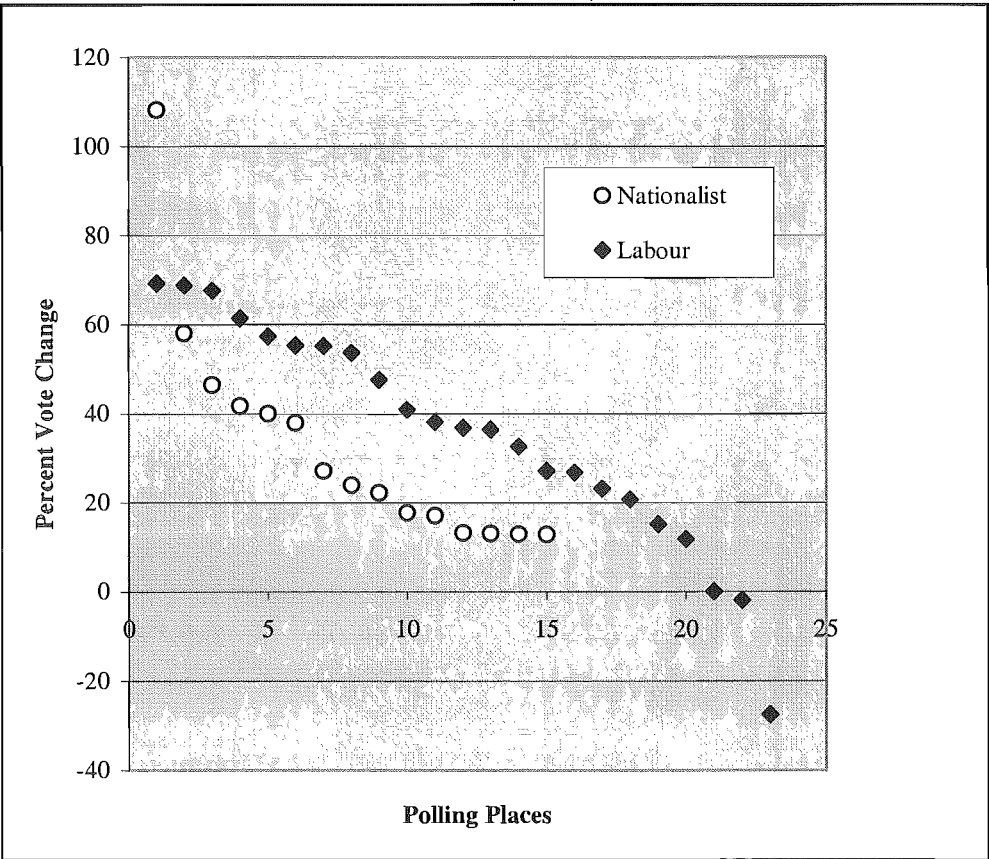
<sup>214</sup> The minor parties each won a single polling place.

Malone contended that an influx of ‘rural workers’ in country areas took place prior to the 1935 election. We need to establish whether Labour-won polling places had larger increases in proportions of occupations that correlated positively with Labour (namely, manuals and white-collars), and / or decreases in proportions of occupations that correlated negatively with Labour (namely, farmers and farm workers).

The third test, therefore, compares 1931 and 1935 electoral rolls by subtracting proportions of four occupational categories in 1931 from those proportions in 1935, leaving a percentage point difference in each occupation for each polling place. These differences were averaged for each category in two groups—Labour-won and Nationalist-won polling places—as set out in table 4–2.

All four occupational categories increased in number between 1931 and 1935 at both Labour-won and Nationalist-won polling places, except for white-collars who had a small reduction in numbers at Nationalist-won polling places. Farmers averaged a 0.2 percentage point higher increase at Labour-won polling places. Farm workers averaged 1.2 percentage points higher increases at Labour-won polling places. White-collars averaged 3.6 percentage points higher increase at Labour-won polling places, but the highest average increase was by manuals—a 13.5 percentage points favouring Labour-won polling places.

Figure 4–4: Polling Places by Party Allegiance and by Percent Vote Increase, Waikato Electorate 1931–1935 (N = 38)



The fact that seven of the eight measures all show gains supports Malone's contention for a 'substantial swing to Labour...accompanied by a noticeable increase in the number of voters'. Rural polling places generally showed marked increases in voters. In one sense, changes appear to favour manuals and white-collars, because subtracting gains at Nationalist-won polling places from gains at Labour-won polling places establishes that the differential is almost twice as large for manuals and white-collars (405 voters), as it was for farmers and farm workers (236 voters).<sup>215</sup>

By another reading, the total net increase of 639 farmers and farm workers outweighed the total net increase of 405 manuals and white-collars. Nevertheless, the increase in manuals—notwithstanding that farmers and farm workers together remained more than 50 percent of the male electors—coupled with the clear Nationalist loss through third-party voting, combined to give the Labour Party a default win in the election. It is ironic that the mainstream conservative vote in 1931 was 56.8 percent and that the total conservative vote in 1935 was also 56 percent—in the former case it was enough for victory, and in the latter case enough for defeat.

### ***Research hypotheses***

*Hypothesis 1: the majority of farmers voted Labour (strong version); alternatively, Labour won because sufficient farmers combined with other voters (weak version).*

The weak version applies in Waikato. In particular, farmer (and / or farm worker) votes were needed to make up the shortfall between the Labour vote and the aggregate of manuals and white-collar workers.

*Hypothesis 2: farm workers voted Labour.*

There is no evidence that farm workers systematically voted for Labour.

*Hypothesis 3: white-collar workers voted Labour.*

White-collar workers correlated positively with Labour voting.

*Hypothesis 4: minor party votes came disproportionately at the expense of Nationalist votes.*

Agreed: this was a major factor in Nationalists' loss in the Waikato electorate.

*Hypothesis 5: changes in rural electorates' occupational profiles during the depression benefited the Labour party.*

Yes, but the changes did not put Labour voters on a par with Nationalist voters.

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<sup>215</sup> Manuals and white-collars  $[(344 + 63) - (10 + -12)] = 405$ ; farmers and farm workers  $[(206 + 233) - (101 + 102)] = 236$ .

*Hypothesis 6: higher voter turnout benefited Labour in 1935*

Confirmed: up to a point, this follows from Labour's tendency to dominate larger polling places.

***Conclusion***

Labour took more votes across the spectrum of the varying urban and rural polling places than it did in other rural cases in this study. Three factors intersected to give Labour victory in this electorate: a relative increase in proportions of manuals and white-collars, compared to farmers and farm workers; a farmer vote split mainly between Nationalists and Country party; and enough farmer and farm worker votes to Labour that offset the conservative vote totalling 56 percent.

## Chapter 5: The Raglan Electorate 1935

### *Introduction*

The Raglan electorate had several distinguishing features in 1935. Although won back by the conservatives in 1931, it was the only North Island rural electorate previously held by Labour. Raglan was one of just five North Island electorates—and two in this study—assessed by the Representation Commission as having 100 percent rural population, which some historians have apparently taken to mean that the electorate would have had a comparatively high proportion of farmers. In addition, Raglan was one of Robert Chapman's 'special country' electorates, implying that Raglan contained a 'large number of manual labourers in a special occupation'; in this case, coal mining.

W. Lee Martin, a farmer, first won the seat for Labour in a by-election in 1927.<sup>216</sup> In 1928, the conservative vote split and Martin consolidated his position. In 1931, faced with a two-cornered contest, Martin lost the seat: the Coalition put up D. S. Reid, a farmer from Ngahinepouri, who took 53.3 percent of the vote. Despite losing the election, the Labour party increased its percentage from 35.5 in 1928 to 46.7 percent in 1931.

In 1935, Martin and Reid joined a four-cornered contest that returned Martin with 55.5 percent of the vote—well ahead of Reid on 37.2 percent. Martin's margin of 1 695 votes is the second-largest Labour margin in the 10 cases of this study. Labour's electoral watershed saw poor polling for minor parties: in third place was J. H. Potter (Democrat) with 6.3 percent, and in fourth place was H. D. C. Hampton (Independent), a farm hand from Te Rore, with 1.0 percent (96 votes).<sup>217</sup> Neither Potter nor Hampton won a polling place.

In 1931, Martin had won 11 polling places out of a possible 53. In 1935, Martin increased his tally to 29 polling places from a possible 56. Split voting, which had ruined the hopes of both

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<sup>216</sup> W. Lee Martin was the first farmer elected as a Labour MP, and went on to become Minister of Agriculture in the first Labour government.

<sup>217</sup> The Independent's data are not included in the database.

conservative contenders in 1928, no longer featured. In 1935, had all minor-party votes gone to the Nationalists, the party would still have totalled only 4 130 votes, or 44.5 percent.

### *Polling place voting profile*

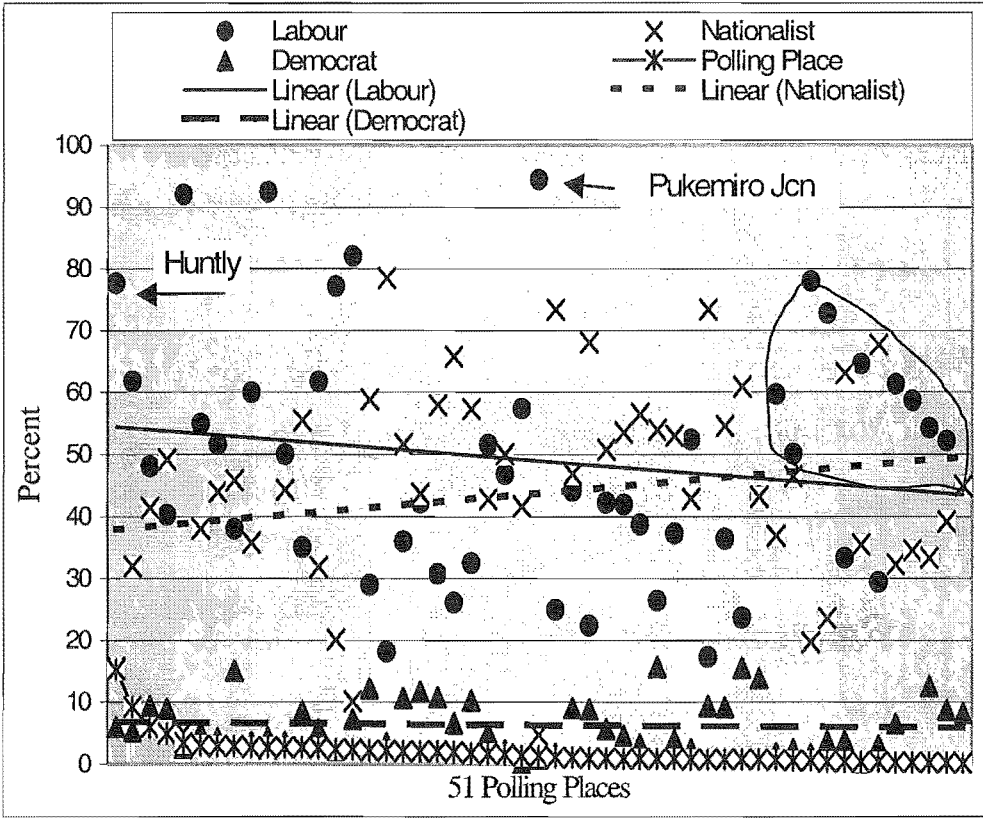
Labour won a smaller percentage of the polling places than the party's vote share, indicating that Labour-won polling places had more voters than Nationalist-won polling places. This has implications for the election analysis—uneven voter distribution stems from large proportions of electors in towns and townships in this 'rural' electorate. Polling places in the database<sup>218</sup> range from Waikaretu (24 votes) to Huntly (1 321 votes), whose votes constituted 14.2 percent of the electorate total. Ngaruawahia, with 7.9 percent of the vote; Tuakau, with 5.2 percent; Ohaupo, with 3.4 percent; and Te Awamutu, with 3.3 percent were the next largest polling places. Labour's massive 67 percent vote share at these five polling places gave the party a 1 283-vote advantage over the Nationalists, and constituted a vital ingredient of the party's win. Across these five key polling places, manual workers outnumbered farmers by a ratio of approximately 3:2 in this 100 percent rural dweller electorate.

Figure 5–1 plots each of 51 polling places by party vote share, as well as by share of electorate votes. Data are ordered by decreasing polling place vote; that is, polling places to the left of the plot have more votes than those to the right. The plot portrays several important characteristics of the Raglan electorate. Firstly, Labour's vote diminishes as polling places become more rural. The Labour vote trend line ('Linear Labour') shows that, in general, Labour won significant margins over the Nationalists only in larger, urban polling places. Nationalists, conversely, improved their vote share outside the urban areas: in the middle part of the plot, where the medium-sized polling places are represented, the Nationalist vote is much more pronounced. A notable exception is Pukemiro Junction, at the top centre of the plot, with a 94.4 percent Labour vote. By the time the most rural polling places were reached, Nationalists had taken a lead of several percentage points over Labour.

Not all went Nationalists' way in rural areas. In the smaller polling places to the right of the plot lies a cluster of nine polling places where the Labour vote exceeded 50 percent; an unusual occurrence in more rural areas of the test cases. Across the nine, Labour took 313 votes—68.3 percent—to Nationalists' 126 votes—27.5 percent.

<sup>218</sup> The database for Raglan has 51 polling places: excluded were Elliot's Block (77 votes), and Karakariki (29 votes), which had no matching electoral roll entries. Woodleigh (46 votes), Moerangi (20 votes), and Ruapuke (51 votes) were also excluded because they had one or two individuals in just a single occupational category (see chapter 3). Four of these polling places were won by Labour and one by the Nationalists. In addition, 53 of the male electoral roll entries (0.5 percent) were excluded because there were no occupational descriptions provided.

Figure 5-1: Polling Places by Percentage of Party Vote and by Decreasing Percentage of Electorate Vote, Raglan Electorate 1935 (N = 51)



Note: See text for the explanation of the demarcated area.

Only 19 votes went to the two minor parties. The occupational profile heavily favoured farmers, who were a mean 63.1 percent of male electors; and farm workers, a mean 17.2 percent of male electors. Manual workers, a mean 14 percent, and white-collar workers, a mean 4.3 percent, were well outnumbered. Manuals exceeded 50 percent of male electors in only one of the eight small polling places. Although the difference of 187 votes in Labour’s favour could make no difference to the overall result, the finding supports the convention that some farmers voted Labour. This question will be explored at length in the section dealing with occupational profiles.

The Democrat voting trend line shows that, by and large, the party’s polling was relatively even across the more urban, or the more rural, polling places. Table 5-1 summarises voting data. Huntly contributed 49.2 percent of voters in the five largest polling places. At the remaining 46 polling places of the database, Labour’s share of the vote fell to 49.8 percent, although this still exceeded Nationalists’ share of 43.7 percent and indicates that Labour penetrated the rural hinterland of this electorate.

Table 5–1: Party Vote, Raglan Electorate 1935

Polling Places	<i>Lab.</i>	<i>Nat.</i>	<i>Dem.</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Lab.%</i>	<i>Nat.%</i>	<i>Dem.%</i>	<i>Total</i>
Largest 5	2085	802	196	3 083	67.6	26.0	6.4	100.0
Smallest 46	2 727	2 394	360	5 481	49.8	43.7	6.6	100.1
Huntly	1 026	206	78	1 310	78.3	15.7	6.0	100.0
Electorate	5 148	3 453	581	9 278	55.5	37.2	6.3	99.0

Faring poorly in the larger, more urban, polling places, Nationalists took only 15.7 percent of the vote in Huntly; rising to 26 percent across the five largest polling places, and going on to a peak of 43.7 percent in the smaller, generally more rural, polling places. The Democrat candidate's share of each group of polling places confirms an earlier suggestion—from the flat trend line in figure 5–1—that the party took similar proportions of the vote whether the polling places were urban or rural.

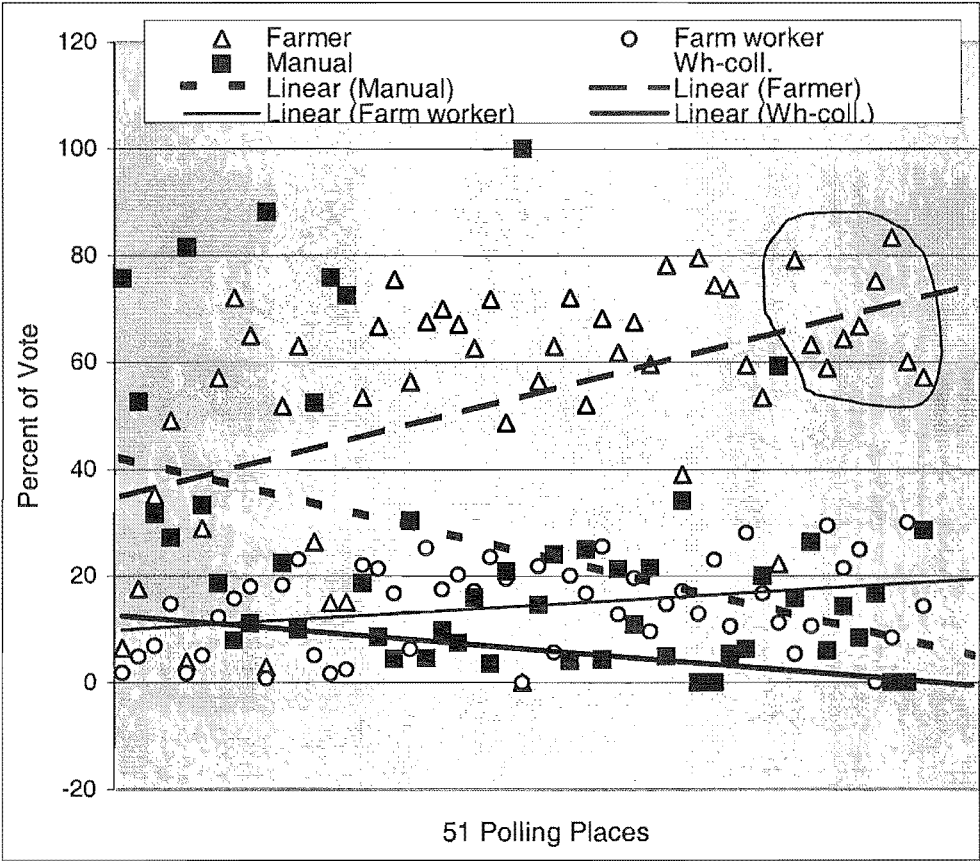
### *Polling place occupational profile*

Across the electorate, farmers comprised 39.7 percent of male electors; farm workers, 10.7 percent; manuals, 38.6 percent (miners constituted 38 percent of manuals); and white-collars, 11.0 percent. Figure 5–2 plots proportions of each of the four occupational categories across 51 polling places. The plot is structured in the same way as figure 5–1, by decreasing polling place share of the electorate vote. Farmer data show the opposite tendency to the falling polling place line, with a rising trend as the polling places become smaller; beyond the first third of the polling places, farmer percentages dominated.

Manual workers feature in the largest polling places. The five largest, for example, had 38.8 percent of male electors, but 58.5 percent of the electorate's manual workers. Outside these areas, proportions of manual workers fall sharply as proportions of farmers rise. In rural areas, manual proportions rarely come close to those of farmers; except for Pukemiro Junction, with 71 manuals of whom 60 were miners.



Figure 5-2: Polling Places by Percentages of Four Male Occupational Categories, Raglan Electorate 1935 (N = 51)



Notes: 1. Data are ordered by decreasing polling place votes, as for fig. 5-1; data points have been omitted for clarity.  
2. For an explanation of the demarcated area, see text.

A 94.4 percent vote for Labour comes as no surprise, but also confirms that pockets of manuals in rural electorates managed a degree of Nationalist voting. The nine small polling places highlighted to the right of the chart are those that featured unusually high Labour vote percentages in figure 5-1, showing here a predominance of farmers.

Nevertheless, these are proportional data. Figure 5-2 indicates that farmers dominated the electorate in the sense that they comprised more than 50 percent of the male electors at 37 of the 51 database polling places, but Huntly alone gave Labour an 820-vote margin over Nationalists. Such was the electoral effect of a few large polling places in these rural electorates.

White-collars exceeded farm workers at more urbanised polling places, but positions quickly reversed in more rural polling places. Like manuals, white-collar proportions tended to lessen in smaller polling places and white-collars also allied with Labour voting. Farm workers mirrored the distribution of farmers, with larger proportions in rural areas where there were more Nationalist votes.

*Correlations between occupations and party votes*

Table 5–2 contains correlations between proportions of each occupational category and vote proportions of Labour, Nationalist, and Democrat candidates at each polling place. The data confirm that farmers (.71) and farm workers (.61) were positively associated with Nationalist voting; and that manual workers (.77) and white-collar workers (.29) were positively associated with Labour votes. White-collar correlations are noticeably weaker than the other three categories, implying that the white-collars were the most likely to vote for other parties. Democrat votes were positively associated only with farmers (.36),

**Table 5–2: Polling Place Correlations between Party Vote Proportions and Male Occupational Category Proportions, Raglan Electorate 1935 (N = 51)**

	<i>Labour</i>	<i>Nationalist</i>	<i>Democrat</i>
Farmer	-.73	.71	.36
Farm worker	-.57	.61	-.00
Manual	.77*	-.76	-.32
White-collar	.29	-.31	-.02

Note: \* Removing miners reduces this coefficient to .33.

although zero-correlations between farm workers and Democrats (–.00), and between white-collars and Democrats (–.02), imply that those categories may have also given some votes to Democrats.

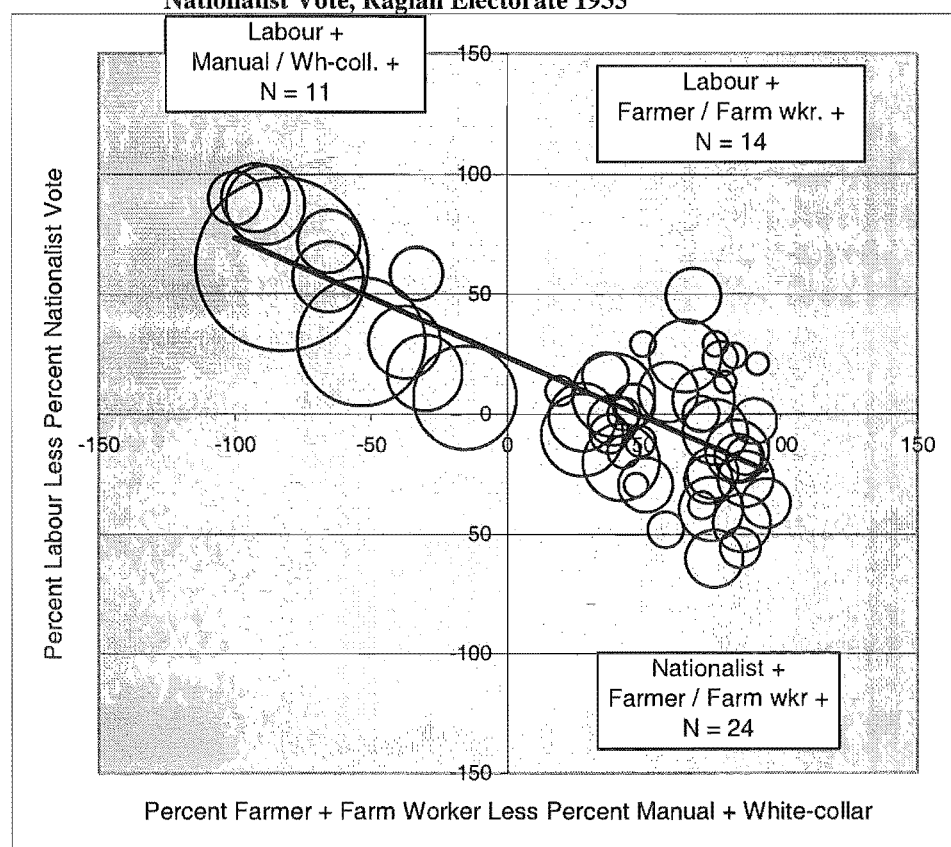
Raglan had similar characteristics to other rural electorates in this study, with a small number of polling places that had high proportions of manual and white-collar workers, along with high proportions of Labour votes. The two main parties and the four occupational categories are plotted on the bubble chart at figure 5–3. Here, farmers are aggregated with farm workers, and manuals with white-collars, because each pair was aligned in their voting. Raglan electorate had 25 Labour-won and 24 Nationalist-won

polling places.<sup>219</sup> As was common in these rural electorates, most polling places had a majority of farmers (in this case, 37 of the 51 polling places).

As mentioned, the bubble chart highlights the majorities of manual workers and Labour votes at the largest polling places. The slope of the trend line indicates that proportions of Labour votes increased as proportions of farmers reduced, contrary to the historiography. There are two polarities in the plot. The first polarity consists of the upper left and lower right quadrants, where the association between occupation and party voting appears to follow conventional patterns: higher proportions of manual workers are associated with higher proportions of Labour voting.

The second polarity, however, consisting of the lower left and upper right quadrants, gives some insight into the incidence of cross-party voting in Raglan. The 14 polling places in the upper right quadrant (28.6 percent) favoured the Labour party but comprised mainly farmers. On the other hand, there were no polling places that leaned towards Nationalist voting and comprised mainly manuals. This evidence favours the orthodox view that some farmers voted Labour in 1935.

**Figure 5-3: Polling Places by Percent Farmer Plus Farm worker, Less Percent Manual Plus White-collar; and by Percent Labour Less Percent Nationalist Vote, Raglan Electorate 1935**



<sup>219</sup> These totals exclude the two polling places (Rotokauri and Te Hutewai) where the same number of votes were cast for both Labour and Nationalists.

The 14 Labour-voting farmer-plus-farm worker polling places contributed 1 916 votes, including 5.0 percent for Democrats, 39.9 percent for Nationalists, and 54.1 percent for Labour: a margin for Labour of 14.2 percent. The occupational composition across the 14 polling places was: 60.4 percent farmers; 15.0 percent manuals; 18.1 percent farm workers; and 6.5 percent white-collars. Even if all manuals and white-collars (a combined 24.6 percent) at these polling places voted for Labour, there would have been a shortfall of 29.5 percent. If we then assume all farm workers also voted Labour, we are left with a minimum 6.4 percent of the vote that could have come only from farmers. In practice, the farmer percentage would have been higher in the event of cross-party voting by other occupational categories.

Table 5–3 lists numbers of farmers and manuals, and of the three parties votes, according to whether the polling places were won by Labour or Nationalists. One expects to see some evidence of farmers voting Labour, because electorate proportions of manuals and white-collars—the two Labour-aligned categories—were insufficient to account for a Labour party electorate vote of 55.5 percent. The table is a simplification because it does not include farm worker or white-collar worker data; nevertheless, manuals and farmers comprised more than three-quarters of the male electors.

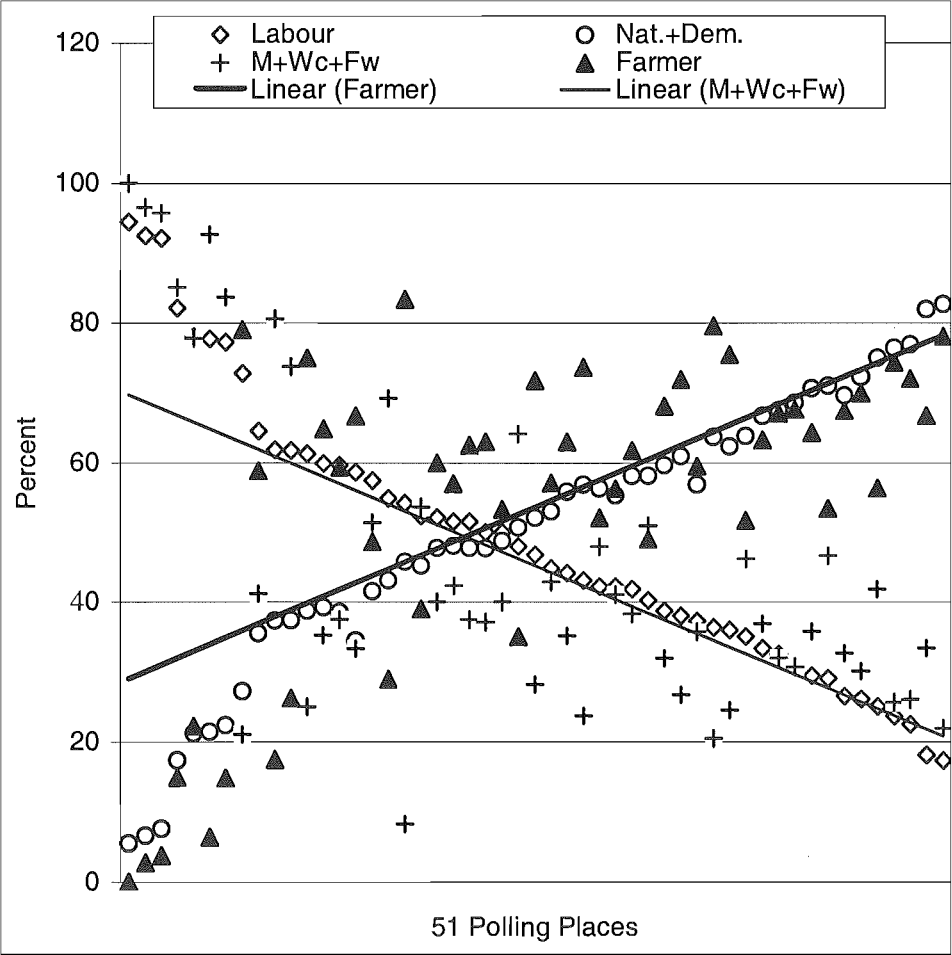
**Table 5–3: Percentages of Two Male Occupational Categories in Three Polling Place Groupings, Raglan Electorate 1935**

Polling Places	<i>Farmers</i>	<i>Manuals</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Nationalist</i>	<i>Labour</i>	<i>Democrat</i>	<i>Total</i>
25 Lab.-won	910	1862	2 772	1 488	3 781	276	5 545
24 Nat.-won	1 351	291	1 642	1 661	984	268	2 913
Total	2 261	2 153	4 414	3 149	4 765	544	8 458

Figure 5–4 attempts to answer these questions. Labour voting is plotted against the combined Nationalist and Democrat vote. This was done for three reasons: the first is that correlations indicate a positive relationship between farmers and Democrat voting; the second reason is that farmers and farm workers were aligned in regard to Nationalist voting. The third reason is that if one assumes that all

Democrat votes came from farmers and farm workers, the maximum Labour voting that could be generated by manuals and white-collars is revealed. The plot makes it clear that manuals and white-collars alone were sufficient to provide the Labour vote in only nine of 51 polling places; that is, the combined manual and white-collar proportion exceeded the Labour vote in nine polling places. Where the manual and white-collar combined proportion is less than the Labour vote—that is, in 42 cases—assistance must have come from farmers and / or farm workers.

Figure 5-4: Polling Places by Labour Vote, Aggregated Nationalist and Democrat Vote, Farmer Proportions, and Aggregated Manual, White-collar, and Farm worker Proportions, Raglan Electorate 1935 (N = 51)



As for the question of whether farmers or farm workers were more responsible for Labour voting, we can recast the question: how many polling places have a Labour vote that exceeds the aggregate proportion of manuals, white-collars, and farm workers? This will establish the *minimum* number of polling places at

which Labour voting had to come from farmers. Accordingly, the plot shows 24 polling places where the combined manual / white-collar / farm worker proportions fall below the Labour vote proportion, requiring a ‘top up’ from farmers. This is a worst-case scenario: we have deliberately tried to find enough votes for Labour from sources other than farmers. In addition, we loaded Democrat votes on to the farmers. The conclusion is that farmer votes were needed in *more than half* of the 42 polling places where manual and white-collar votes alone could not supply the Labour vote.

### *Changes in the occupational profile of the electorate*

The electoral roll increase of 9.3 percent from the previous election raises questions concerning the occupational categories involved. Comparing general and supplementary sections of the roll reveals new entries since the previous election. Most new male voters were manuals, whose numbers increased by 34.5 percent. Miners made up 38.0 percent of manuals on the overall roll but increased by 15.2 percent—less than half the rate—of other manuals. White-collar workers increased by 26.8, and farmers by 23.9 percent—although this disguises the fact that both farmers and white-collars lost relativity with manuals and farm workers. Raglan’s farm workers had the largest proportional increase—92.0 percent—but the number of new farm workers was relatively small.

**Table 5–4: Composition of Four Male Occupational Categories on General and Supplementary Electoral Rolls, Raglan Electorate 1935**

	<i>Farmer</i>	<i>Farm worker</i>	<i>Manual</i>	<i>White-collar</i>	<i>Total</i>
General roll	1 854	323	1 659	503	4 339
Percent	42.7	7.4	38.2	11.6	99.9
Supplementary roll	444	297	573	135	1449
Percent	30.6	20.5	39.5	9.3	99.9
Total roll	2 298	620	2 232	638	5 788
Percent	39.7	10.7	38.6	11.0	100.0
Change	– 5.0	3.3	0.4	– 0.6	N/A
Percent increase	23.9	92.0	34.5	26.8	N/A

### *Higher voter turnout benefited Labour in 1935*

One cannot distinguish between higher vote numbers resulting from higher roll numbers—up by 9.0 percent—and higher vote numbers resulting from higher voter turnout—up by 10.3 percentage points. For polling places common to both the 1931 and 1935 elections, Labour vote percentages increased by a mean 25 percent; whereas Nationalist vote percentages increased by a mean 25.7 percent. In other words, there was no appreciable difference.

By another reading, 10 Labour-won polling places in 1931 showed a mean total vote increase of 17.4 percent in 1935; the 40 Coalition-won polling places showed a mean total vote increase of 25.2 percent.<sup>220</sup> However, Labour won 13 additional polling places in 1935, where the mean total vote increase was 30.2 percent (Nationalists, of course, made no gains). Put another way, polling places that went to Labour in 1935 showed higher vote increases than polling places that remained either Labour or Nationalist.

### *Chapman's electorate typology*

This section examines the 'special country' designation that Chapman gave to Raglan, although problems arise because the typology is broadly defined and difficult to test. However, there are four ways of testing the designation: firstly, electorates qualified as 'special country' if they had 'a large number of manual labourers in a special occupation'; secondly, was Raglan similar or dissimilar to other electorates of the same theoretical type? Thirdly, apart from questions of proportional weight, what was the electoral impact of miners? Fourthly, as previously described, Chapman claimed the 'bloc of Labour support [in Raglan] held the balance only when the farmers were divided.' Does the occupational profile bear out this claim?

The first test—were there large numbers of miners?—takes into account that miners comprised over one-third of Raglan's manuals. One suspects that Chapman underestimated the number of manuals in these electorates, otherwise he surely would have made mention of the fact that overall numbers of manuals, most of whom were not in a special occupation, were roughly equivalent to farmer numbers. But were miners a 'large number'? There were more than 800 miners; an apparently large number. Nevertheless, comprising about 14 percent of male electors, or fewer than one in seven, miners were actually quite a small number.

The second test—Raglan's position relative to supposedly dissimilar 'farmer' electorates, and supposedly similar 'special country' electorates—does not bear much scrutiny (at least, in this 10-electorate study). Raglan, with 38.6 percent manuals, was closer to the 33.1 median manual percentages of the seven

<sup>220</sup> One polling place recorded identical vote numbers in 1931.

'farmer' electorates than it was to the 55.3 percent median of the two 'special country' electorates (Waimarino and Thames). Moreover, as noted, Raglan had slightly fewer manuals than farmers. Admittedly, Chapman did not specify ratios of manuals and farmers—limiting the potential to test his classification—but there were four other electorates in this study that also had more manuals than farmers, and these electorates were designated—ironically, as it turns out—'farmer'.<sup>221</sup>

The third test considers miners' electoral impact. The electoral solidarity of special occupations in general, and of miners in particular, derived from several factors: the nature of the work; level of unionisation; spatial separation through miners' location in pockets of workers in the countryside, rather than being spread throughout the electorate; and miners' pre-eminent role in labour, and Labour party, history. Correlations between Raglan's miners and Labour voting support the weight given to miners' position. Located in only 15 polling places—less than one-third of the database polling places—miners strongly correlate (.77) with Labour voting.<sup>222</sup> This correlation is compromised by the uneven distribution of miners: if we take into account only miner proportions in their 15 polling places, the coefficient increases to .86. In the final analysis, however, miners' solidarity with Labour meant less in terms of election outcomes than did miners' proportion of male electors. Miners' evident solidarity—beguiling for historians—did not serve as a stimulus for other manuals strongly to support Labour.

Fourthly, the Raglan result did not necessarily come down, as Chapman suggested, to whether or not farmers were divided (which, *inter alia*, implies that farmers outnumbered manuals). The other three sections together constituted 60.3 percent of the males, so farmers were not required to constitute a majority of male electors.<sup>223</sup> Theoretically, farm workers' allegiance could also have been decisive since they were a sizeable section with 10.7 percent—only a few percentage points behind miners—but farm workers have failed to rate a mention in 'special country' cases.

The question posed was whether Raglan constituted a special case; however, the structure of this electorate did not differ sufficiently from that of other rural electorates to justify treating it differently from the general run of rural electorates.

<sup>221</sup> Deduced from Chapman's 1963 typology, see 'Response', pp. 227–278. They were Marsden, Manawatu, Hauraki, and Bay of Plenty electorates.

<sup>222</sup> Total manual correlation with Labour is given as .77 (rounded from .765) in table 5–3. This is not to be confused with the miners-only correlation with Labour of .77 (rounded from .766).

<sup>223</sup> Chapman, 'Significance', p. 136.



### ***Research hypotheses***

*Hypothesis 1: the majority of farmers voted Labour (strong version); alternatively, Labour won because sufficient farmers combined with other voters (weak version).*

Farmers' strong positive correlation with Nationalist voting, and equally strong negative correlation with Labour voting, contradict the strong version. The weak version holds by implication, because Labour-aligned categories did not constitute a large enough block of votes to account for Labour's electorate vote, even if every individual in those categories voted Labour.

*Hypothesis 2: farm workers voted Labour.*

This hypothesis is not supported: farm workers correlated negatively with Labour voting. Some proportion of farm workers probably joined some proportion of farmers in voting Labour. Farm workers' negative correlation with Labour voting was weaker than farmers' negative correlation, implying that farm workers were slightly more inclined than were farmers to vote Labour. However, this point cannot be pressed too far, as farm workers' distribution across the electorate was less consistent than was that of farmers.

*Hypothesis 3: white-collar workers voted Labour.*

Raglan data support this hypothesis: white-collars correlate positively with Labour voting.

*Hypothesis 4: minor parties took votes disproportionately from the Nationalists.*

This hypothesis is supported in Raglan's case: farmers were the principal source of Nationalist votes, but also correlated positively with Democrat voting.

*Hypothesis 5: changes in rural electorates' occupational profiles during the depression favoured the Labour party.*

This hypothesis is supported by Raglan data, because Labour-aligned manuals had increased during the depression. The increase in manuals (and to a lesser extent white-collar workers) offset smaller increases in Nationalist-aligned farmers and farm workers.

*Hypothesis 6: increased voter turnout benefited Labour in 1935.*

Raglan data offer qualified support for this hypothesis: polling places that changed from voting Coalition in 1931 to voting Labour in 1935 showed higher increases in total votes than other polling places; the support is qualified because one cannot distinguish between electoral roll increases and higher turnout.

### *Conclusion*

Labour improved on its 1931 performance in Raglan by doubling its share of polling places, and penetrated the rural reaches of the electorate more than it generally did in these farming electorates. Labour easily won the largest urban areas that had large majorities of manual and white-collar workers, as it did in the eight other Labour-voting rural electorates in this study. The party converted a narrow loss (by 5.4 percentage points) in a two-cornered contest in 1931 into a comfortable win (by 18.3 percentage points) in a four-cornered contest in 1935. This happened because white-collar workers allied with traditional Labour supporters, manual workers; because population shifts during the depression left intact the proportion of Labour-aligned manuals, but took several percent off the electorate's total of farmers; and because enough farmers voted Labour to give the party a comfortable majority. Raglan was a Nationalist loss rather than a Labour win, because Nationalists had the theoretical numbers to win; but manuals—especially miners—proved more single-minded in their preference for Labour than did farm workers or farmers: the latter gave crucial votes both to the Democrats and to the Labour party. The Raglan electorate in 1935 emphasises rural heterogeneity—underestimated or ignored by historians—revealed in these 10 electorates.

## Chapter 6: The Tauranga Electorate 1935

### *Introduction*

Comprising part of Bay of Plenty sub-district of Auckland province, Tauranga was a coastal electorate located between Bay of Plenty electorate to the southeast, and Thames and Waikato electorates to the northwest, as well as Rotorua to the west. Tauranga county and the northern part of Whakatane county constituted the major part of the electorate area, which showed large intercensal increases between 1926 and 1936. Tauranga county (with a 23.7 percent increase), and Whakatane county (with a massive 81.4 percent increase), reflect population increases due to forestry. The increase in Tauranga borough (33.4 percent) illustrates early growth due to holiday and retirement purposes.<sup>224</sup> In line with census increases, voter numbers swelled 21 percent, up from 9 499 in 1931 to 11 495 in 1935.

Tauranga township (three polling places) dominated the electorate proper, along with Te Aroha (two polling places) and Te Puke (two polling places): together, the three contributed 4 005 votes, or 39 percent of the electorate total. These townships constituted the urban core of the electorate, which the Representation Commission assessed as having 69 percent rural dwellers. The Tauranga electorate fell 11 percentage points below the median rural population in the 10 test cases.

In 1931, three conservative candidates contested the general election: F. Colbeck (Independent); W. Sullivan (Independent Coalition); and C. E. MacMillan (Coalition). The result was a predictable split vote—MacMillan's winning margin of 658 votes over Sullivan was dwarfed by 1 803 third-party votes. In 1935, the election was a five-way contest between MacMillan (now Nationalist), a farmer from Tauranga; two new conservatives, A. E. Robinson (Country party), and C. T. McFarlane (Democrat); and two candidates from the political left: C. H. Burnett (Labour), a retiree from Tauranga; and F. Polley (the only socialist candidate in the ten test cases of this study), a contractor from Tauranga. In other words, one candidate represented the conservative mainstream, two represented conservative protest parties, and two represented different shades of the left.

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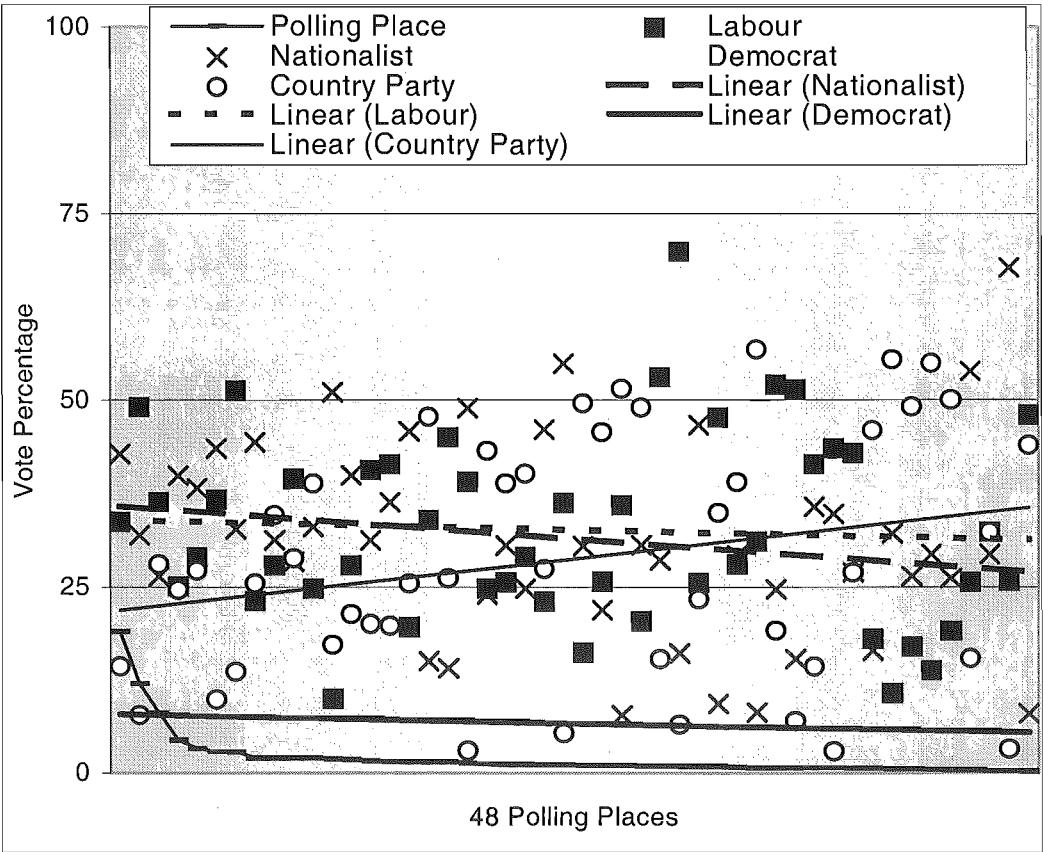
<sup>224</sup> Town and Country Planning Branch, Ministry of Works, *A Survey of New Zealand Population*, (Government Printer, Wellington, 1960), p. 106.

Not surprisingly, given the five-way contest, MacMillan was unable to maintain the 42.3 percent share of the vote that he won in 1931. In 1935, MacMillan (34.7 percent) lost to Labour (35.1 percent), with the Country party (21.8 percent) achieving the highest third-party vote in the 10 surveyed electorates. The Democratic party (7.8 percent) came fourth, and the Socialist party (0.52 percent) was fifth.<sup>225</sup> Minor parties took a total of 3 102 votes (30.2 percent), dwarfing Labour’s 35-vote margin. Discounting the Socialist vote leaves two conservative protest parties to compete with Nationalists, at least according to orthodox interpretations. The data analysis reveals that this question was pivotal to the election result.

*Polling place voting profile*

Figure 6–1 illustrates the relationship between each polling place’s vote share and the four-party vote.

**Figure 6–1: Polling Places Plotted by Decreasing Percentage of Electorate Votes, and by Vote Percentages of Four Parties, Tauranga Electorate 1935 (N = 48)**



<sup>225</sup> Polley’s 53 votes were excluded from the data analysis unless stated otherwise.

Numbers of votes were unevenly distributed across the electorate—the largest seven polling areas contributed 52.3 percent of the total valid vote.<sup>226</sup> Foremost was the town of Tauranga with 19 percent of the valid vote, followed by Te Aroha with 11.9 percent and Te Puke with 8.1 percent. Remaining polling places each contributed 2.1 percent or less of the total vote. Democrat voting proportions appear to have been consistent across the electorate, as the trend line is virtually flat.

The plot features an unusual decline in Nationalist voting as the polling places became smaller, and generally more rural. The common pattern seen in these rural electorates is for Nationalist votes to increase in rural areas. The pattern of Labour voting also differed from that of other electorates, because it showed only a small decline in more rural areas of the electorate. As Nationalist and Labour voting decreased, Country party voting rose significantly.

Table 6–1 shows that Tauranga township, the largest polling area, and as will be discussed later, one with many more manual than farmers, went to the Nationalists with 42.8 percent; Labour took 33.8 percent, Country took 14.3 percent, and Democrats managed 8.0 percent. Only Nationalists and

**Table 6–1: Party Vote Numbers in Six Polling Place Groupings, Tauranga Electorate 1935.**

Polling Places	<i>Labour</i>	<i>Nationalist</i>	<i>Country</i>	<i>Democrat</i>
Largest 7	2 027	1 975	877	460
Smallest 7	65	94	104	11
Largest 24	2 835	2 931	1 620	657
Smallest 24	571	433	558	103
Tauranga township	658	834	279	156
Electorate	3 602	3 567	2 243	806

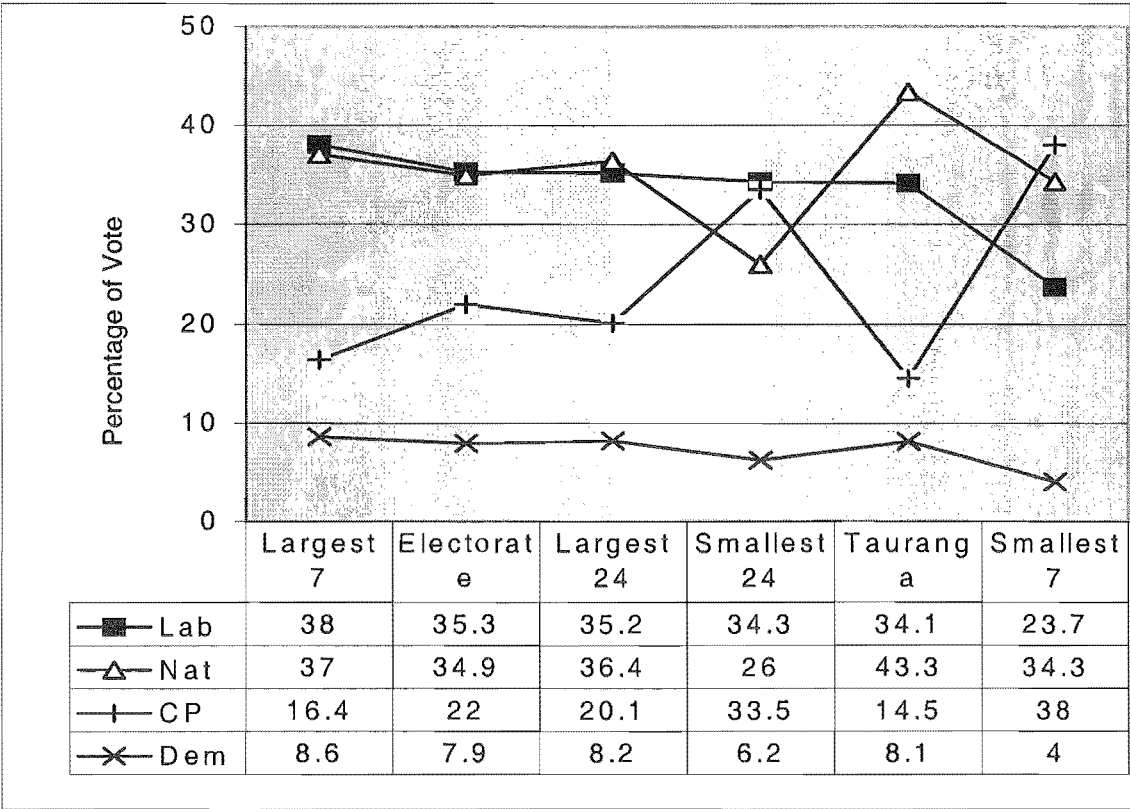
<sup>226</sup> The election results list 52 individual polling places, but the database comprises 48. Tauranga township's three polling places—Norris's Garage, 204 votes; Baptist Hall, 623 votes; and County Chambers, 1 121 votes, aggregate to 1 948 votes. There were two polling places at Te Aroha—Courthouse, 893 votes; and Parish Hall, 334 votes; two at Te Puke—Courthouse, 774 votes; and No. 2 Road, 56 votes.

Democrats did relatively well here, in the sense of exceeding their electorate share. In contrast, Te Aroha, the second largest polling area and, again, one with more manuals than farmers, went to Labour with 49.1 percent; Nationalists took 31.9 percent, Country took 11.2 percent, and Democrats took 7.7 percent. Labour went on to win the largest seven polling places by a margin of 52 votes over the Nationalists.

As well as in Tauranga township, Labour also lost the contest with Nationalists in the seven smallest polling places (by 29 votes), and in the largest 24 polling places (by 96 votes). Overall, Labour won 24 of the 48 database polling places, but Labour-won polling places proved to be smaller (with a mean vote of 185), than those won by Nationalists (with a mean vote of 221). Labour prevailed because of higher vote margins. At Nationalist-won polling places, Nationalists took 667 votes more than Labour. At Labour-won polling places, Labour gained 709 more votes than Nationalists; a net advantage to Labour of 42 votes. Nationalists won the ‘special votes’<sup>227</sup> from Labour by a margin of seven, thereby reducing Labour’s 42-vote advantage to 35 votes—the party’s margin of victory in the electorate.

To track relative voting shifts of the four parties, figure 6–2 plots their percentages for each of the polling

Figure 6–2: Party Vote Percentages in Six Polling Place Groupings, Tauranga Electorate 1935



<sup>227</sup> These were ‘Absent, declaration, postal, and seamen’s votes’.

place groupings given in figure 6–1. Data are ordered by decreasing electorate vote. Variations in Democrat voting, swamped by those of the other three parties, do not feature in the analysis. Country party votes can now be set against those of the two mainstream parties.

The largest seven polling places saw Labour's vote increase by 2.7 percentage points compared with the party's electorate share. Similarly, Nationalists' vote rose by 2.1 percentage points; but the Country party's vote fell by 5.6 percentage points. The Country party's loss in urban polling places appears to have worked in Labour's rather than in Nationalists' favour. The largest 24 polling places' votes show little variation from electorate-level percentages, although a slight rise in the Nationalist share of 1.5 percentage points accompanied a fall of 1.9 percentage points in the Country party share.

The smallest 24 polling places show Labour's vote down by 1.0 percentage points, but Nationalists' votes, which dropped 8.9 percentage points, again moved in the opposite direction to Country, whose vote rose by 11.5 percentage points. In Tauranga township itself, the Labour vote dropped by 1.2 percentage points, and the Nationalist vote, which increased by 8.4 percentage points, yet again moved in the opposite direction to the Country party vote, which fell 7.5 percentage points. Finally, in the seven most rural polling places, Labour posted its weakest performance: the party's votes were down by 11.6 percentage points; whereas Nationalists polled just 0.6 percentage points below their electorate share, and the Country' party staged its strongest performance: its vote rose by an impressive 16 percentage points.

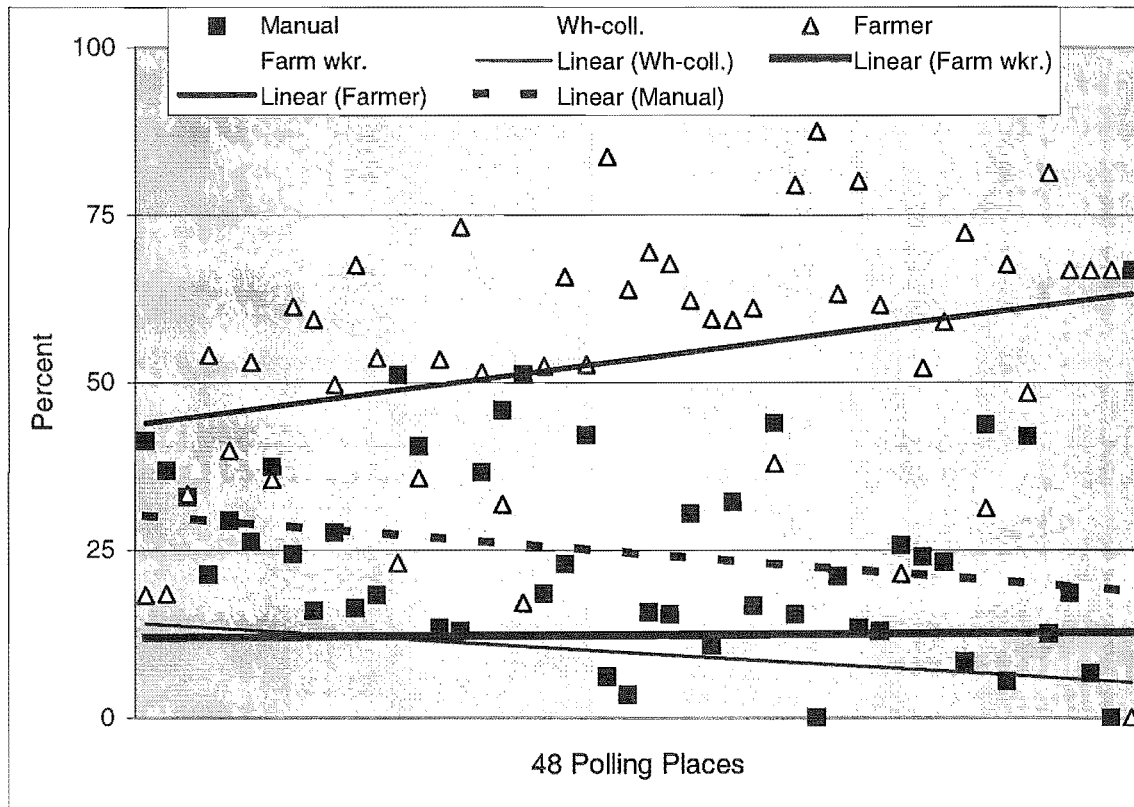
Two conclusions can be drawn: one is that Country party voting moved against Nationalist voting in each of the five comparisons; but did so only twice against Labour voting. The other factor is that, unusually, proportions of Labour votes were relatively static across the spectrum of polling places; they shifted to an appreciable degree only in the most rural reaches of the electorate.

### *Polling place occupational profile*

Electorate proportions of the four occupational categories were: farmers, 39.5 percent; farm workers, 10.1 percent; manuals, 30.3 percent; and white-collar workers, 20.1 percent. Although farmers were not an outright majority, they were the largest of the four categories. Nevertheless, starting from the assumption that farmers and manuals each aligned largely with a particular party (as seen in other cases), white-collars rather than farm workers held the voting balance.

Figure 6–3 plots polling places by proportion of each of four occupational categories. The plot is structured in the same way as figure 6–1; that is, data are sorted from left to right by decreasing polling place vote proportions, and in this instance, data points for polling place vote share are omitted for clarity. The plot indicates how occupational profiles change with polling place size. As polling places decrease in

**Figure 6-3: Polling Places Plotted by Decreasing Percentage of Electorate Vote and by Percentages of Four Male Occupational Categories, Tauranga Electorate 1935 (N = 48)**



Note: data points for white-collars and farm workers were omitted for clarity.

proportions of total votes—in other words, have fewer voters—farmers’ occupational proportions increase strongly; farm workers’ proportions increase very slightly; but both manual and white-collars’ proportions decrease in parallel. In Tauranga, relationships between occupational proportions generally resemble those of other electorates in this study. There is, however, a discrepancy: in other cases, a rising farmer trend line mimics a rising trend line of Nationalist voting. In this case, however, figure 6-1 reveals a falling trend line for Nationalist voting. Instead of matching Nationalist voting, a rising farmer trend line matches Country party voting. It remains to see whether the next section—correlations between party vote proportions and occupational category proportions—indicate a positive association between farmers and Country party votes.



Taking polling place groupings in sequence of total vote proportions—that is, from the smallest seven polling places to the smallest 24, to the largest 24, to the largest seven polling places, and finally, to Tauranga township—both farmer and farm workers' proportions steadily dwindled, while those of manuals and white-collars steadily increased. There is no deviation from this pattern.

**Table 6–2: Percentages of Four Male Occupational Categories in Six Polling Place Groupings, Tauranga Electorate, 1935**

Polling Places	<i>Farmer</i>	<i>Farm worker</i>	<i>Manual</i>	<i>White-collar</i>	<i>Total</i>
Largest 7	28.6	8.1	35.2	28.2	100.1
Smallest 7	63.3	15.6	17.0	4.1	100.0
Largest 24	36.2	9.9	32.1	21.9	100.1
Smallest 24	59.2	11.8	21.1	7.8	99.9
Tauranga township	18.2	2.3	41.4	38.1	100.0
Electorate	39.5	10.1	30.3	20.1	100.0

### *Correlations between occupations and party votes*

Table 6–3 lists correlations between four occupational category proportions and party vote proportions, following the same polling place groupings as before.<sup>228</sup> Farmers consistently correlate negatively with Labour voting; most strongly (–.73) in the smallest polling places where farmers were most numerous, but also quite strongly (–.58) in the largest 24 polling places, and in the largest seven polling places (–.49). The electorate correlation—the most important—registers a weaker coefficient (–.24), influenced by farmers' negative associations with Democrat voting. These arise mainly in the largest 24 polling places, where the correlation is –.33. Farmers correlate positively (.24) with Country party in the electorate as a whole; in the largest seven polling places (.32); and in the largest 24 polling places (.44). In addition, farmers correlate positively with Nationalist voting in the smallest seven polling places (.54), and in the largest 24 polling places (.17).

<sup>228</sup> It is accepted that correlations based on fewer polling places are not as reliable as those which are based on larger numbers of polling places.

**Table 6-3: Polling Place Correlations between Percentages of Four Male Occupational Categories and Party Vote Percentages, Tauranga Electorate 1935 (N = 48)**

Polling Places		<i>Farmer</i>	<i>Farm wrkr.</i>	<i>Manual</i>	<i>White-collar</i>
Smallest 7	Lab.	-.73	-.29	.51	.92
	Nat.	.54	.50	-.62	-.47
	Dem.	.64	.68	-.74	-.63
	C.P.	-.22	-.40	.44	.02
Smallest 24	Lab.	-.09	-.10	.09	.09
	Nat.	.00	.25	-.19	.09
	Dem.	.13	.42	-.27	-.14
	C.P.	.02	-.24	.17	-.10
Largest 24	Lab.	-.58	.07	.46	.33
	Nat.	.17	.03	-.37	.15
	Dem.	-.33	.18	.26	.35
	C.P.	.44	-.01	-.14	-.53
Largest 7	Lab.	-.49	.20	.62	.12
	Nat.	.33	-.22	-.28	-.13
	Dem.	-.01	-.65	-.29	.44
	C.P.	.32	.19	-.41	-.22
Electorate	Lab.	-.24	-.04	.21	.17
	Nat.	-.03	.16	-.16	.16
	Dem.	-.08	.17	-.04	.07
	C.P.	.24	-.15	-.01	-.30

Tauranga's farm workers show more varied associations than do farmers. Farm workers correlate positively (.50) with Nationalist voting in the smallest seven polling places, and in the smallest 24 polling places (.25). Conversely, farm workers correlate negatively (-.22) with Nationalists in the largest seven

polling places where 46.5 percent of all farm workers were to be found. This is an unusual result: in most of the present case studies, farm workers generally associate positively—although sometimes weakly so—with Nationalist voting. Farm workers also correlate positively with Democrats: their electorate-level correlation (.17) is essentially the same as their correlation with Nationalists (.16). Such associations are weak but consistent.

Manual workers associate positively with Labour in all polling place configurations—most strongly (.62) in the seven largest polling places, where two-thirds of the electorate's manuals lived. Manual workers' positive association of .44 with Country party voting features in the more rural seven polling places and of .17 in the 24 smallest ones. As proportions of manuals increase, associations with Country party turn negative: -.14 in the 24 largest polling places; and -.41 in the seven largest polling places. Manuals stand out—the one occupational category to positively associate with Country party in areas where Country garnered its highest vote share.

In Tauranga, white-collars correlate positively with Labour voting, as is the norm in the case studies. Correlations are generally weaker than manuals', except in the seven smallest polling places, where the coefficient was .92, compared with manuals' coefficient of .51. This correlation can be disregarded, however, as these white-collars came to just six of 147 male electors. Manuals' positive correlations, as well as with the Labour party, include Nationalist voting—an unusual result—although correlations at electorate level (.16), and for the largest 24 polling places (.15), were weak. Apart from white-collars' problematic correlation of .92 with Labour that has already been noted, white-collars correlate most strongly (.35) with Democrat voting in the 24 largest polling places, and in the seven largest polling places. The force of this finding is mitigated by Democrats' low overall vote share, although coefficients were generated where white-collars were most numerous.

Tauranga electorate's correlations are weak compared with other cases in this study. A few, those from the seven largest polling places and the 24 largest polling places, are medium strength. The probable cause comes back to mixed allegiances by all four categories, to the presence of two minor parties that both polled higher than Labour's winning margin, and to the strong third-party vote that was more than half that of either Labour or Nationalist candidates.

*Distribution of predominant occupations and party votes*

The bubble chart at figure 6–3 considers relative polling place numbers as well as differences between the predominant two parties and the predominant two occupational categories. The trend line slope signifies that, as polling places tend to have more farmers, they also tend to have more Nationalist votes. A gentle aspect to the slope reflects a close vote and, consequently, low correlation coefficients.<sup>229</sup> Nationalists and Labour each won 24 polling places; but 37 polling places had more farmers than manuals, compared with only 11 polling places with more manuals than farmers.<sup>230</sup> Overall numbers of farmer may have only been 9.2 percentage points higher than overall numbers of manuals, but farmers were the largest occupational category, and manuals tended to concentrate in urban areas. Interpreting the election result is made more difficult by the fact that the Country party took more than one-third of the polling places: five by outright majority; 12 by plurality; and one split with the Nationalists.

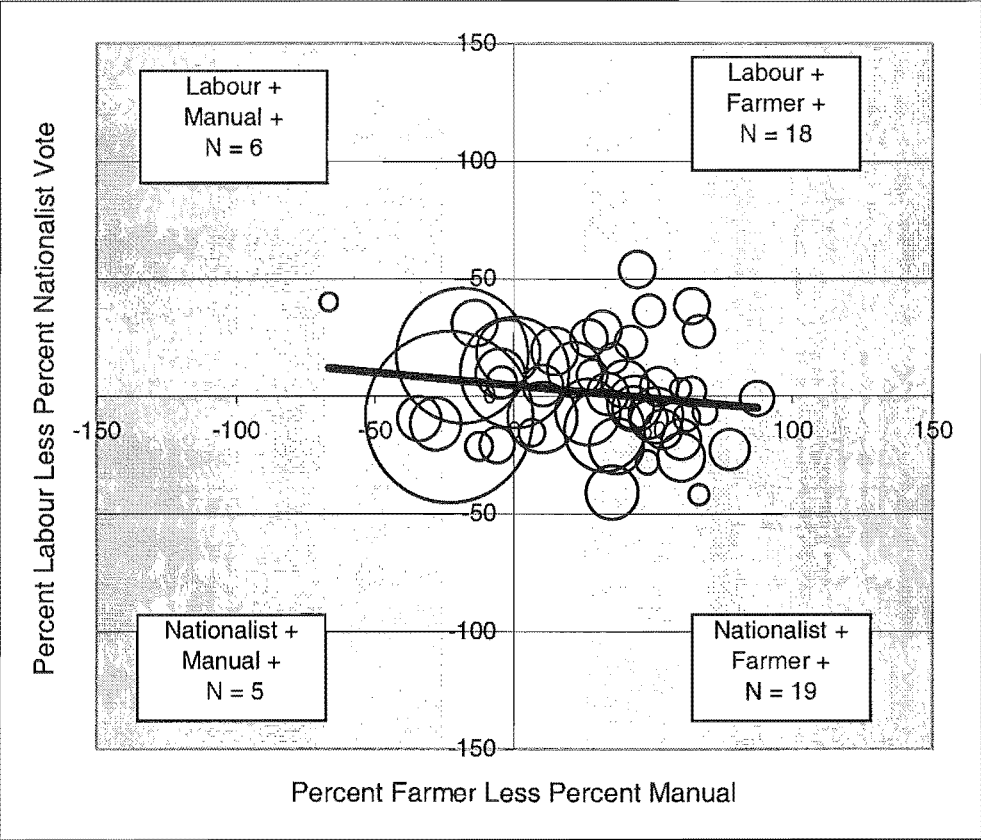
Eleven manual-dominated polling places voted Labour in six cases, Nationalist in four cases, and Country party in one case. Thirty-seven farmer-dominated polling places voted Labour in 11 cases, Nationalist in 10 cases, and Country party in 16 cases. On one level, Labour won more farmer booths than Nationalists did—implying that farmers were more aligned with Labour than with Nationalist voting. On another level, far from abandoning Nationalists to vote Labour, farmers turn out to have been more aligned to the minor party than they were to either mainstream one. Third parties, according to the historiography, split the vote by taking sufficient votes away from the Nationalists to allow Labour an easy victory. In this case, however, Country was farmers' party of choice.

Farmer-dominated polling places cast 1 745 votes for Nationalists, 34.8 percent of the three-party vote; 1 690 votes for Labour, 33.7 percent of the three-party vote; and 1 576 votes for the Country party, 31.5 percent of the three-party vote. The difference between the two mainstream parties was just 1.1 percentage points in favour of the Nationalists.

<sup>229</sup> Note that the slope is less pronounced than if the trend line was recording a single party against a single occupational category—these data are differences between two percentages, and they tend to mitigate the slope of the trend line.

<sup>230</sup> Of 37 polling places won by Nationalists, 33 had an outright farmer majority of more than 50 percent of male electors. On the other hand, only three of the 11 polling places won by Labour had an outright majority of manuals.

**Figure 6-4: Polling Places by Difference Between Percentage Farmer and Percentage Manual, and Between Percentage Labour and Percentage Nationalist Vote, Tauranga Electorate 1935 (N = 48)**



Manual-dominated polling places cast 1 716 votes for Labour, or 43.6 percent; 1 619 votes for Nationalists, or 41.1 percent; and 602 votes for the Country party, or 15.3 percent. The difference between the two mainstream parties was 2.5 percentage points in Labour’s favour, a 42-vote advantage.<sup>231</sup> On this count, manual-dominated polling places were just slightly less ambivalent in their voting than farmers were. The effect of the Country party vote speaks for itself: farmer-dominated polling places cast 2.6 times more votes for the Country party than did manual-dominated ones.

<sup>231</sup> Computed by summing the two parties’ vote totals and finding the difference.

*Partial correlations*

Partial correlations controlling for Democrat voting reveal such small changes as have no substantive significance. Partial correlations controlling for Country party votes, however, reveal different voting associations, evident in Table 6–4.

**Table 6–4: Zero-order and Partial Correlations (Controlling for Country Party Voting Effects) between Proportions of Four Male Occupational Categories and Major Party Vote Proportions, Tauranga Electorate 1935 (N = 48)**

	<i>Labour</i>		<i>Nationalist</i>	
	Zero -order	Partial	Zero - order	Partial
Farmer	--	--	.18	.26
Farm worker	--	--	.07	.13
Manual	.22	.23	--	--
White-collar	.32	.30	--	--

Partials in the Labour data are disregarded, since the coefficients vary at most by two one-hundredths. In the Nationalist data, both farmers and farm workers associate more positively when Country party voting effects are removed. Country party voting has suppressed the ‘true’ correlation of farmers, and to a lesser extent of farm workers, with Nationalist voting. Partial correlations confirm a tentative finding from figure 6–1 that Country party support in rural areas came at Nationalists’ expense.

*Changes to occupational categories during the depression*

Two related questions arise: the first question tests the extent to which occupational categories changed relative to each other over this period; the second question tests whether rural labouring jobs increased or decreased during the depression. In the first place, we have noted that farmers—and, to a lesser extent, farm workers—correlated negatively with Labour voting; and that manuals and white-collars correlated positively with Labour voting. It follows that an increase in proportions of manual workers and / or white-collar workers, or a decrease in proportions of farmers and / or farm workers, would have worked to Labour’s advantage. Supplementary roll data in Table 6–5 reveals a large increase in the farm worker

category, although overall proportions of farm workers remained low. Admittedly, in this delicately poised electorate, even small proportional changes were potentially decisive.

**Table 6–5: Changes in Male Occupational Category Proportions on Electoral Roll, Tauranga Electorate 1935**

	<i>Farmer</i>	<i>Farm worker</i>	<i>Manual</i>	<i>White-collar</i>	<i>Total percent</i>
General Roll	42.7	6.7	29.0	21.6	100.0
Supp. Roll	29.8	20.5	34.5	15.2	100.0
Total Roll	39.5	10.1	30.3	20.1	100.0

The second question— whether rural labouring jobs increased or decreased during the depression—is answered in the affirmative. Numbers of both manual workers and farm workers increased—manuals by 1.3 percentage points; farm workers by 3.4 percentage points—but the advantage lay with manuals because their category was 4.3 times larger to begin with.

### *Voter turnout*

In 1935, voter turnout in Tauranga was 11.3 percentage points higher than in 1931—the largest increase of ten electorates in this study. At the same time, the electorate’s population increased substantially, as noted above: the combination produced a mean 40.2 percent increase in the number of votes cast at each polling place. Across the four largest polling places, for example, 1 068 more votes were cast in 1935 than in 1931. Unfortunately, there is no way of knowing which occupational categories, if any, contributed most to the increase in votes; and the lack of a Labour candidate in 1931 prevents us from comparing party votes in the two elections. Instead, correlations between percentage increases in votes at each polling place and proportions of Labour and Nationalist voting, produce a slight positive correlation of .08 with Labour voting, and a weak negative correlation of  $-.17$  with Nationalist voting. Therefore, polling places where Labour performed better tended to be—to a very small extent—polling places that experienced larger influxes of voters.

### ***Research hypotheses***

*Hypothesis 1: the majority of farmers voted Labour (strong version); alternatively, Labour won because sufficient farmers combined with other voters (weak version).*

Farmers correlated negatively with Labour voting in all areas of the electorate. As proportions of farmers increased, proportions of Labour voting decreased. Tauranga's farmers tended to be Nationalist and Country party supporters.

*Hypothesis 2: farm workers voted Labour.*

Farm workers' overall correlation with Labour voting was only slightly negative, because farm workers in the most urban polling places showed a small preference for Labour. Numbers of farm workers in the urban areas were low, however, minimising the advantage to Labour. Elsewhere, farm workers appear to have divided between Nationalist and Democrat voting.

*Hypothesis 3: white-collar workers voted Labour.*

White-collar workers split between Labour, Nationalist, and Democrat voting, in that order.

*Hypothesis 4: minor parties took votes disproportionately from the Nationalists.*

Tauranga data support this hypothesis, because farmers tended to vote either for Nationalists or for the Country party.

*Hypothesis 5: changes in rural electorates' occupational profiles during the depression favoured the Labour party.*

Manual workers, Labour's principal supporters, featured strongly in Tauranga's occupational category changes during the depression. The effect of this was, however, partly offset by a small reduction in white-collar workers. The increase in manuals was far too small to tip the occupational profile in Labour's favour, as happened in certain other rural electorates.

*Hypothesis 6: increased voter turnout benefited Labour in 1935.*

It is impossible to differentiate between effects of higher electoral roll numbers and higher voter turnout; but limited support for the hypothesis comes from the fact that larger increases in votes correlate positively with Labour voting proportions.

### ***Conclusion***

Tauranga has proven exceptional in this analysis of 10 farmer electorates. In the first place, Tauranga is the only electorate in which farmers do not correlate positively overall with Nationalist voting—although the correlation is essentially a zero-correlation rather than negative—and does not mean that large



numbers of farmers did not support the Nationalists. Farmers supported Nationalists and the Country party in urban areas; farm workers split between Democrats in urban areas and Nationalists in rural areas.

Secondly, the Labour party—supported by manuals and white-collars who comprised just over half of the male electors—took barely more than one-third of the vote. This confirms two characteristics of rural electorates: more often than not, farmers were a minority of male electors; and the extent to which Labour-aligned occupational categories sometimes voted for the conservatives.

Thirdly, Labour polled relatively strongly in rural reaches of this electorate: the party only narrowly lost the smaller polling places. Without its exceptional rural performance, Labour would not have had a sufficient buffer from a small lead in urban polling places.

Finally, Tauranga had a very large minor party vote—principally, Country party and Democratic party—without which the election would have gone to the Nationalists. Each of three minor parties took more votes than Labour's slender plurality. Country party voting by farmers diluted their clear numerical advantage over manuals, fatally compromising Nationalists' chances of retaining this constituency.

## Chapter 7: The Marsden Electorate 1935

### *Introduction*

The Marsden electorate was the most northern of the North Island rural electorates studied in this thesis, part of the Northland sub-district, which between 1921 and 1926 generally showed net outward migration, except in Whangarei—the largest town—and a few town districts. Between 1926 and 1936, Marsden's population increased by 16.4 percent, with Whangarei showing moderate increases in population of between 7.9 percent (county) and 13.4 percent (borough). Most of the increase occurred in the latter part of this period: the electoral roll rose 6.9 percent by 1931, and rose a further 8.7 percent by 1935. Higher voter turnout compounded the effect of roll increases. Marsden's voter turnout in 1935 was 92.1 percent, 10.6 percentage points higher than in 1931, and the third highest turnout of the 10 cases. What all this meant was an additional 2 114 votes cast in 1935, an increase of 33.4 percent.<sup>232</sup>

The Representation Commission assessed Marsden's population as 64 percent rural: in certain respects a 36 percent urban assessment does not do Marsden justice. The town of Whangarei dominated Marsden, alone contributing more than one-third of electorate votes in 1935. In turn, manual workers dominated Whangarei, comprising more than half the male electors. A number of miners featured at Whangarei and Kamo,<sup>233</sup> but Chapman classified the electorate as 'farmer' rather than 'special country', notwithstanding Marsden's higher ratio of manuals to farmers than, for example, the 'special country' electorate of Raglan.

Despite a relatively narrow win in the 1935 general election (Marsden's margin of 347 votes ranked seventh of the nine Labour-voting cases in this study), Labour made a huge improvement on its 1931 performance. In 1931, A. J. Murdoch (Coalition), a farmer from Whangarei, had taken the seat with 66.8 percent of the vote from J. G. Barclay (Labour), also a farmer from Whangarei, with 33.2 percent. Both candidates stood again in 1935, when Barclay won with 48.1 percent to Murdoch's 44.9 percent.

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<sup>232</sup> Matarau and Pataura are listed in 1935 results but not in 1931.

<sup>233</sup> Most of the 69 miners were found in Whangarei (42) and Kamo (21).

The Labour party increased its vote by 44.9 percent between 1931 and 1935, notwithstanding the presence of two minor party candidates, who together took seven percent of the vote. In third place with 5.5 percent was R. Johns (Democrat party), a farmer from Mata. Democrats polled poorly in Marsden, compared with a mean third-party vote of 11.1 percent across the 10 electorates in this study.<sup>234</sup> Fourth place went to St. Clair Jounneaux (Independent), a farmer from Kamo, with 1.5 percent. Jounneaux managed 58 votes in Whangarei, but otherwise he did not make double figures at any polling place and generally has been excluded from the data analysis. In 1935, Marsden was essentially a two-party contest, although the meagre Democrat vote was still 2.3 percentage points higher than Labour's margin of 3.2 percent.

### *Voting analysis*

Election results for Marsden list 70 polling places, somewhat above the mean of 58 in this 10-electorate study. Marsden's relatively many polling places, along with their small totals of votes, indicate that the truly rural hinterland of the electorate consisted of small polling places with few electors. In fact, 43 of the 70 polling places each contributed less than one percent of total votes, confirming the sprawling nature of this rural electorate. Labour won 30 of 70 official polling places (42.9 percent), somewhat less than the party's 48.1 percent of the vote, indicating that Labour-won polling places had more votes than those won by the Nationalists. On average, Labour-won polling places had an average of 261 votes, against an average of 92 votes in Nationalist-won polling places. Labour's polling places tended to be more urban than rural, unlike those of the Nationalists.

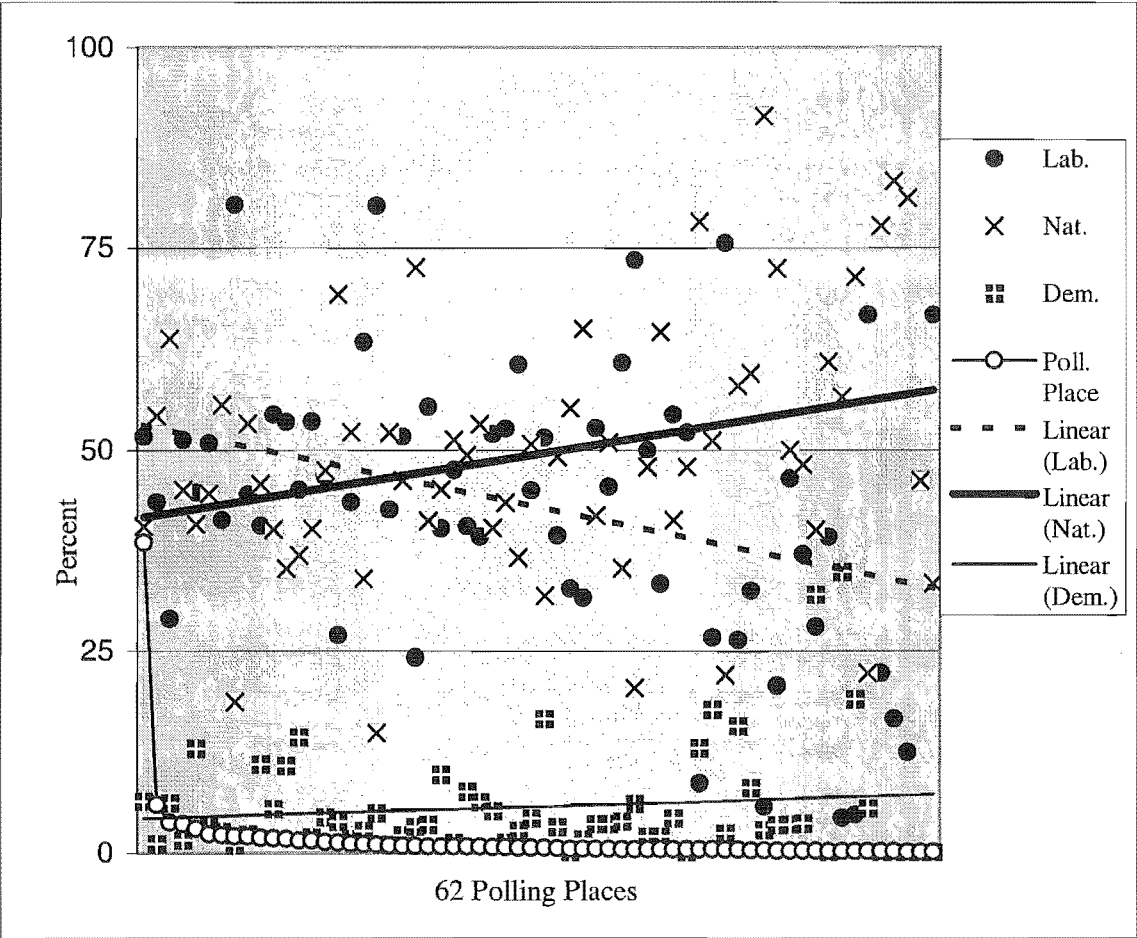
Of 62 database polling places,<sup>235</sup> Labour won 26 (42 percent) to Nationalists' 35 (56.5 percent), with one polling place shared. The Democrat won no polling places but forced Labour into third place in three.<sup>236</sup> Figure 7-1 plots each polling place by four measures: percentage vote for the three main parties, and percentage share of electorate votes. Outside the larger polling places, seen to the left of the plot, the Labour vote tended to fall quite sharply and continued to do so as the polling places become ever smaller and generally more rural. At the same time, the Nationalist vote increased, although its rise was somewhat more gradual than Labour's reduction. This appears due to the Democrat vote, which increased at the same time as that of Nationalists. It is likely that occupational categories that voted Nationalist were also the main source of Democrat votes.

<sup>234</sup> Johns took only one-sixth of the votes at his local polling place.

<sup>235</sup> The four polling places of Whangarei, Hospital (82 votes); Whangarei, Town Hall (2 476 votes); Whangarei, Parochial Hall (1 115 votes); and Whangarei, Armstrong Avenue (260 votes) were aggregated because of insufficient data to determine voters' most likely choice of polling place. In addition, five polling places were excluded because there were no corresponding electoral roll entries: Collins Bush (20 votes), Kourawhero (25 votes), Tangihua (15 votes), Tobaccolands (45 votes), and Waipu North River (26 votes): a total of 131 votes, or 1.2 percent of the electorate vote.

<sup>236</sup> These were small polling places: Ahuroa had 25 votes, Ngunguru had 23 votes, and Tamaterau had 21 votes.

**Figure 7-1: Polling Places by Decreasing Percentage of Electorate Vote and by Percentage of Party Vote, Marsden Electorate 1935 (N = 62)**



As noted, Whangarei was the largest town, with 3 933 votes comprising 36.3 percent of the electorate's votes. Whangarei's votes increased 18 percent between 1931 and 1935. In 1931, the Coalition took 59.2 percent to Labour's 40.8 percent. In 1935, Labour took 52 percent, Nationalists 40.5 percent, and Democrats 6.4 percent. Labour's 437-vote lead in Whangarei was crucial to the party's success in 1935—its election margin of 347 votes was slender, and the polling place of Whangarei, Town Hall, went to Labour by precisely that number of votes.

Moreover, across the other 61 polling places, Labour took 123 votes fewer than Nationalists, indicating Labour's difficulties in the more rural parts of this electorate. After Whangarei, the next largest towns were Warkworth, Portland, Waipu, Kamo, Maungatoroto, and Wellsford; but the largest of these (Warkworth) contributed just 614 votes, or 5.7 percent of the electorate vote.

Table 7–1 sets out the party vote. Nationalists took 39.8 percent of the vote at Labour-won polling places and 57.5 percent of the vote at polling places they themselves won. Conversely, Labour took 54.1 percent of the vote in the polling places it won, against 39.8 percent at Nationalist-won polling places.

Unfortunately for Nationalists, Labour’s relatively smaller vote share was taken in polling places that had far more votes: Labour’s 26 polling places contributed 6 690 votes, 3 444 more than Nationalists’ 36-polling place total. Labour gained a margin of 960 votes at its 26 polling places, against Nationalists’ margin of 646 votes at their 36 polling places; a net gain for Labour of 314 votes. The Labour party did not penetrate rural parts of the Marsden electorate as successfully as Nationalists did, but Labour more than made up for the shortfall by winning larger polling places in urban areas.

**Table 7–1: Labour, Nationalist, and Democrat Vote, Marsden Electorate 1935**

<i>Polling Places</i>	<i>Labour</i>	<i>Nat.</i>	<i>Dem.</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Lab. % of group</i>	<i>Nat. % of group</i>	<i>Dem. % of group</i>	<i>Total %</i>
26 Lab.- won	3 622	2 662	406	6 690	54.1	39.8	6.1	100.0
35 Nat.- won	1 216	1 862	156	3 234	37.6	57.6	4.8	100.0
Whangarei	2 030	1 593	252	3 933	51.6	40.5	6.4	98.5
Electorate	5 215	4 868	602	10 848	48.1	44.9	5.5	98.5

Note: Electorate proportions are based on total valid vote including the Independent’s votes.

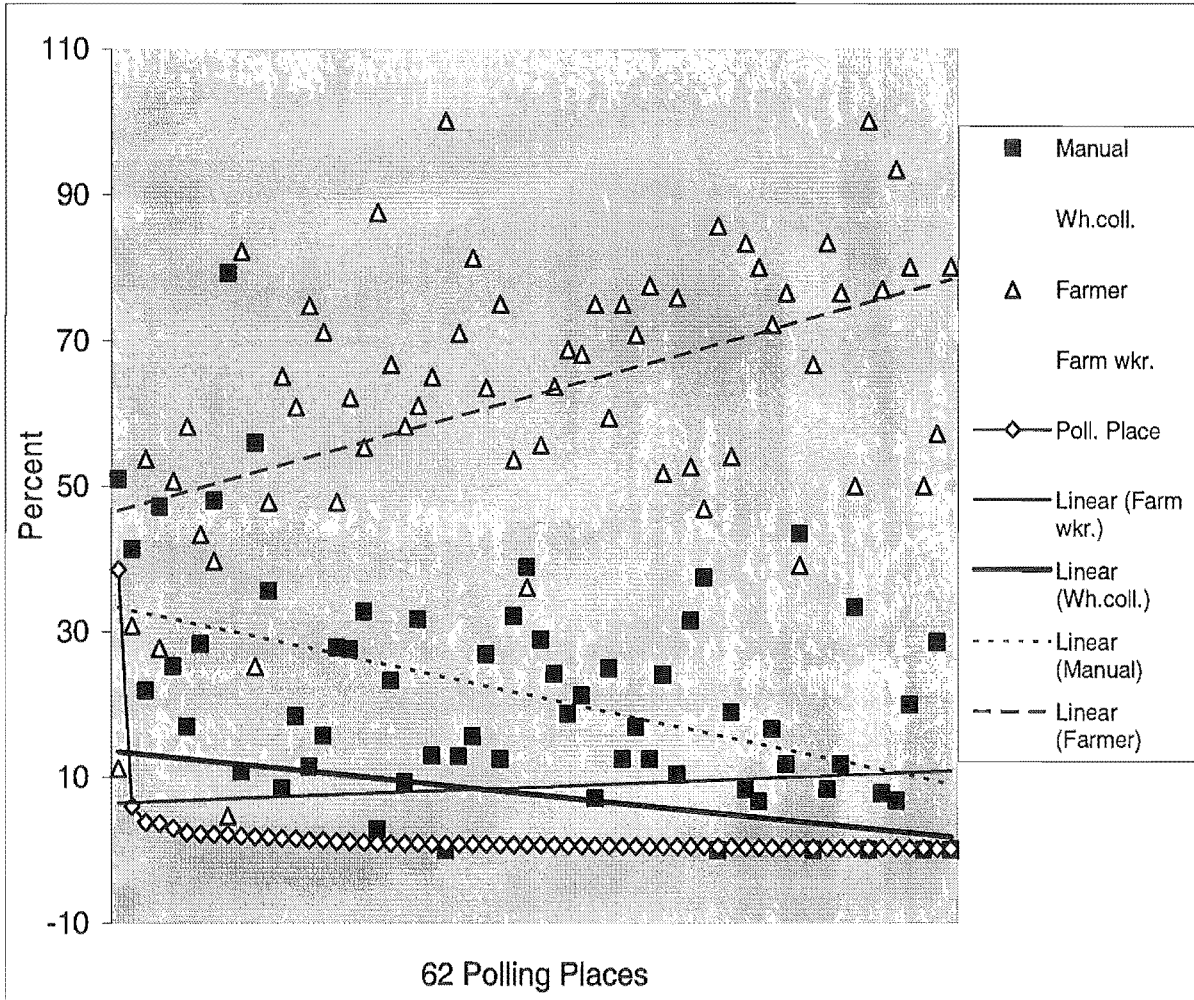
### ***Occupational profile***

Figure 7–2 plots each polling places by percentage of four male occupational proportions and by percentage share of electorate votes. The plot appears dominated by farmers because they were generally the largest occupational category. The plot, however, uses proportional data: manuals averaged 34.8 per polling place against an average of 33.0 farmers. The plot also features a gulf between two data points to the far left representing Whangarei’s manuals (1 168, or 50.9 percent of male electors), and its farmers (257, or 11.2 percent). Whangarei had large numbers of white-collar workers (829, or 36.2 percent), reflecting their numbers in secondary and service industries that are generally associated with larger concentrations of population in urban areas.

Distribution of farmers mirrors distribution of Nationalist votes—increasing percentages of farmers accompany increasing percentages of Nationalist votes—suggesting a positive association between

farmers and Nationalist voting. Distribution of farm workers follows the same pattern as farmers but the tendency is barely evident, because farm workers are the most evenly distributed of the four occupational categories. As noted in the analysis of figure 7-1, percentages of Democrat votes

**Figure 7-2: Polling Places by Decreasing Percentage of Electorate Vote and by Percentage of Four Male Occupational Categories, Marsden Electorate 1935**



Note: for clarity, only trend lines for white-collar and farm workers are included.

increased as polling places became smaller: it is likely, then, that farmers—and to a certain extent, farm workers—were more responsible for Democrat votes than were either manuals or white-collar workers. Conversely, the distribution of manuals (and to a lesser extent of white-collars) mirrors the Labour vote pattern: higher percentages in larger polling places, tailing off in smaller, generally more rural, areas. These data suggest a positive relationship between Labour voting and manual, as well as white-collar, workers.

Figure 7–3 demonstrates occupational category numbers in the five largest polling places. Numbers are plotted instead of proportions to emphasise Whangarei’s pre-eminent importance in the election. Manuals outnumbered farmers at Whangarei, Kamo, and Warkworth, before being overtaken by farmers. White-collars also outnumbered farmers—by more than three-to-one—in Whangarei. The only other polling place where white-collars outstripped farmers was Portland, the ninth-largest polling place, where 17 white-collars outnumbered six farmers out of 130 male roll entries.

**Figure 7–3: Numbers in Four Male Occupational Categories in Five Largest Polling Areas, Marsden Electorate 1935**

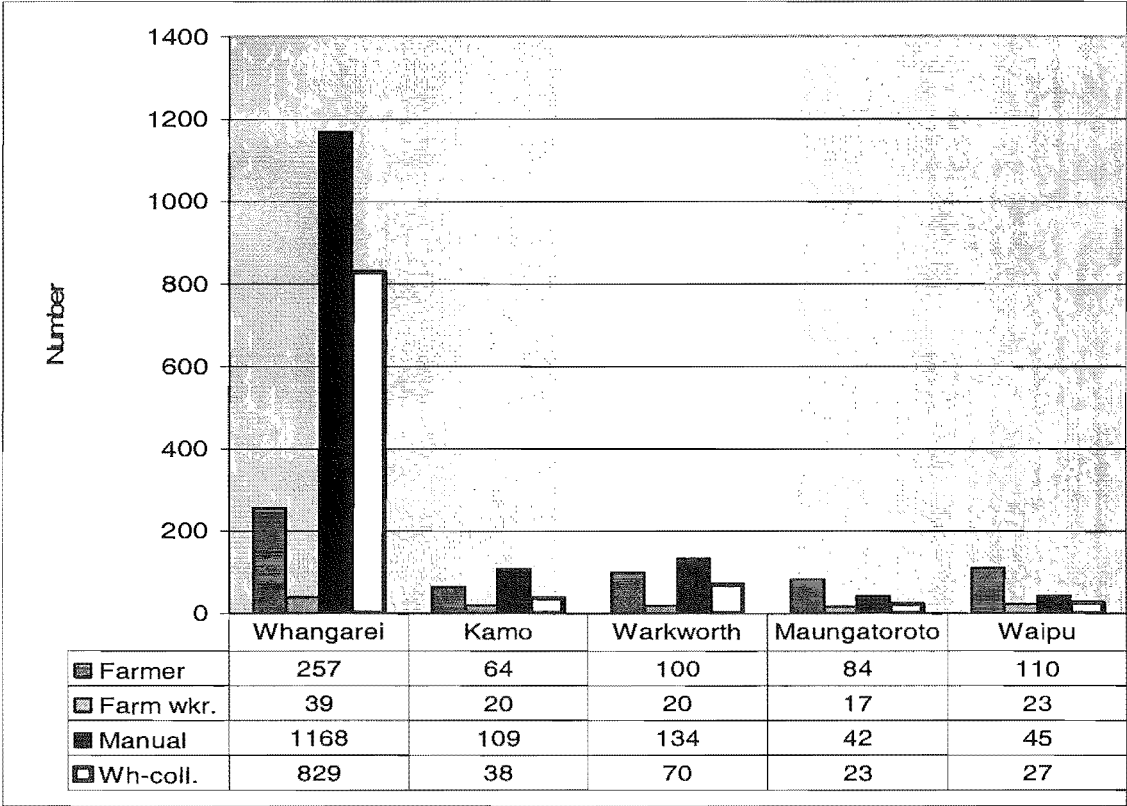


Table 7–2 sets out percentages of four male occupational categories in the electorate and its principal town, and reveals different occupational profiles in polling places won by Labour against those won by Nationalists. The most striking feature of the table is the extent of variation within and between occupational categories in different parts of the electorate. Overall, 2 204 manuals (38.4 percent of male electors) outnumber 2 020 farmers (35.2 percent). Farmers were thinly represented (at 26.9 percent of male electors) in Labour-won polling places, but were strongly represented (55.3 percent of male electors) in Nationalist-won polling places. Farmers (and farm workers) were more evenly represented

than manuals across most of the electorate, because manuals tended to concentrate in larger polling places. Whangarei alone had over half of all manuals, but just over one-tenth of all farmers. At 38.4 percent, manual worker proportions were, overall, very close to the median 38.3 percent in the 10 electorates studied.

**Table 7–2: Composition of Four Male Occupational Categories, Marsden Electorate 1935**

Polling Places	<i>Frmr.</i>	<i>F/wrkr.</i>	<i>Manual</i>	<i>Wh-coll.</i>	<i>Farmer %</i>	<i>F/rwkr %</i>	<i>Manual %</i>	<i>Wh-coll. %</i>	<i>Total</i>
26 Lab.-won	1 070	194	1 715	994	26.9	4.9	43.2	25.0	100.0
35 Nat.-won	974	134	443	209	55.3	7.6	25.2	11.9	100.0
Whang.	257	39	1 168	829	11.2	1.7	50.9	36.2	100.0
Elect.	2 020	321	2 204	1 194	35.2	5.6	38.4	20.8	100.0

In the two smaller occupational categories, 1 194 white-collar workers easily outnumbered 321 farm workers (5.6 percent). Marsden's 20.8 percent white-collars exceeded the median 18.4 percent in the 10 electorates of this study.<sup>237</sup> Whangarei—where white-collars comprised 36.2 percent of males—contained nearly one-quarter of Marsden's white-collar complement.

In Marsden, farm workers' 5.6 percent was just over half of the test case median of 10.4 percent.<sup>238</sup> Although farm workers generally comprised up to 50 percent of males across Marsden's polling places,<sup>239</sup> the median figure was seven percent. From a party perspective, noted above, Marsden was essentially a two-cornered contest; whereas from an occupational perspective, it was essentially a three-cornered contest.

<sup>237</sup> Marsden's white-collars were only exceeded by Hauraki electorate's 22.1 percent white-collars.

<sup>238</sup> Only the 'special country' electorate of Thames had a lower proportion of farm workers (4.7 percent).

<sup>239</sup> The polling place of Pataua recorded one farmer and one farm worker on the electoral roll.



*Correlations between occupations and party voting*

Suggested associations between occupations and party voting derived from plots and tables above are tested by statistical correlation, as set out in Table 7–3.

**Table 7–3: Polling Place Correlations between Percentages of Four Male Occupational Categories and Party Vote Percentages, Marsden Electorate 1935 (N = 62)**

	<i>Farmer</i>	<i>Farm worker</i>	<i>Manual</i>	<i>White-collar</i>
Labour	–.34 (–.78)*	–.17 (–.64)	.43 (.83)	.16 (.56)
Nationalist	.28 (.50)	.14 (.46)	–.37 (–.51)	–.09 (–.43)
Democrat	.21 (.47)	–.01 (.27)	–.16 (–.58)	–.19 (–.16)

Note: coefficients in parentheses derive from data of the five largest urban areas.

Coefficients in parentheses apply to the five largest urban areas, containing 56.1 percent of all electorate males.<sup>240</sup> Farmers showed no Labour-voting inclination: their overall negative correlation with Labour voting of –.34 strengthened to –.78 in the five urban areas. Overall, farmers’ moderate positive correlation of .28 with Nationalist voting strengthened to .50 across the five largest polling places. Urban-dwelling farmers’ stronger correlations—negative with Labour-voting and positive with Nationalist voting—suggest that urban farmers were more polarised along party lines than were their rural counterparts. The ‘neighbourhood effect’ (the idea that voters tend to cross party lines when living in proximity to supporters of other parties) does not seem to apply to Marsden’s farmers.

An expected consequence of the neighbourhood effect would be that urban farmers would show a greater tendency to vote in a similar way to the principal urban voter sections, manuals and white-collars; however, the associations in Table 7–3 suggest the opposite—urban farmers, not rural farmers, correlated more strongly with voting for Nationalists.

Confirming provisional conclusions above regarding third-party votes, farmers correlated positively with Democrat voting (.21), increasing to .47 in the five most urban areas. Overall, farm workers show a zero correlation (–.01) with Democrats, but a positive correlation of .27 in the five most urban areas (where

<sup>240</sup> This group of 56 percent of electorate males comprised 30 percent of Marsden’s farmers, 37 percent of its farm workers, 87 percent of its manuals, and 83 percent of its white-collars.

there was just over one-third of Marsden's farm workers). In other respects, farm workers voted in similar fashion to farmers: they correlated negatively ( $-.17$ ) with Labour voting overall, strengthening to  $-.64$  in the more urban areas; they correlated weakly ( $.14$ ) with Nationalist voting, strengthening to  $.46$  in the more urban areas. Farm worker's correlations were weaker than were farmers' correlations, but this was partly because there were only 321 farm workers altogether, unevenly distributed across the electorate: thirteen polling places listed one farm worker; eight others had no farm workers at all.

In addition, the  $.14$  correlation between Marsden's farm workers and Nationalist voting was somewhat smaller than the  $.21$  median of the 10 rural electorates in this study. Farm workers' positive association of  $.27$  with Democrat voting in the five urban polling places weakened their association with Nationalists. However, as noted, Democrats won only 329 votes (5.9 percent) in the top five polling places—where, after all, there were only 119 farm workers. Even if some Democrat voting depressed farm workers' associations with Nationalist voting, it is unlikely to have made much difference in terms of numbers of votes.

In their strongholds of the five highest-polling areas, manuals correlated more positively ( $.83$ ) with Labour than did manuals in the electorate as a whole ( $.43$ ). Manuals' negative correlation with Nationalist voting ( $-.51$ ) was also stronger in the five urban areas than across the whole electorate ( $-.37$ ). In the five largest polling places, correlations between manual proportions and Democrat vote proportions were exceptional, with a positive association of  $.57$  between manuals and Democrat voting; although, as we saw above, the Democrat vote in these five areas was insignificant at 5.9 percent. Overall, manual workers, with a negative correlation of  $-.16$ , were disinclined to vote for the Democrat candidate.

Cross-party voting by manuals was not restricted to the Democrat vote. Portland appears to be an example of Nationalist voting by manual and white-collar workers. Portland—172 votes for Labour (80.4 percent) and 40 votes for Nationalists (18.7 percent)—could be described as one of the most Labour-oriented of all Marsden's polling places. And yet, Portland's occupational profile consisted of 10 farmers and farm workers, and 120 manuals and white-collars.

Whangarei appears as another example of manual workers voting conservative: its male electors included 257 farmers and 39 farm workers, yet Whangarei managed 1 593 Nationalist votes. On the other hand, the Labour party took 2 030 votes although there were 2 037 manual and white-collar workers. After allowing for women's votes,<sup>241</sup> Labour suffered a sizeable shortfall—presumably, a significant proportion of conservative votes came from otherwise Labour-aligned voters.

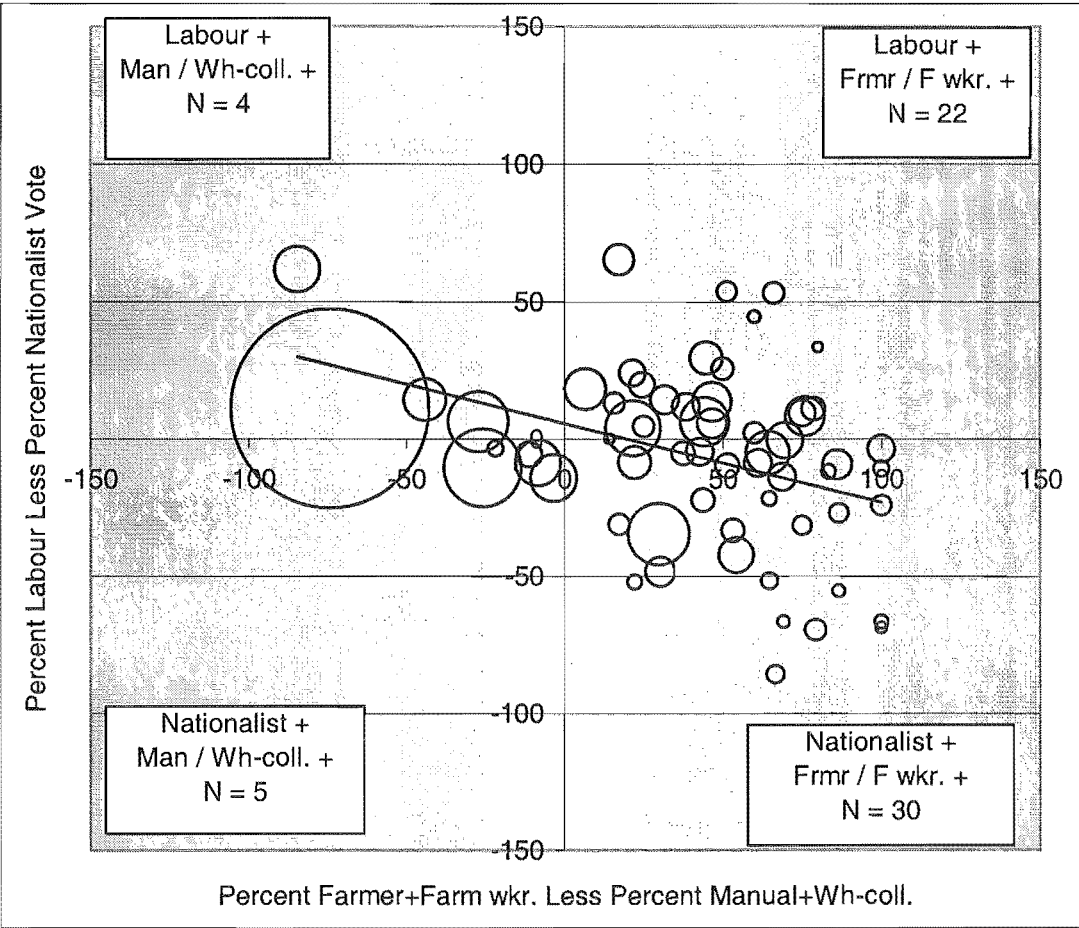
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<sup>241</sup> In Marsden, women comprised 48.0 percent of the electoral roll, with turnout of 91.9 percent. These proportions were subtracted from total votes, leaving the male component.

Across the electorate, Nationalists' 4 868 votes were more than double the combined complement of 2 341 farmers plus farm workers, but Labour's 5 215 votes were far fewer than double the combined complement of 3 398 manuals plus white-collars. On balance, Labour-aligned voters must have been responsible for most of the cross-party voting. In support of this finding, white-collars—a significant section at over 20 percent of male electors—had a low .16 correlation with Labour voting and were approaching a zero-correlation level with Nationalist voting.

Given that both manual and white-collar workers show the same direction of voting associations, as do farmers and farm workers, figure 7-4 plots each polling place by combined percentage of farmers and farm workers, less combined percentage of manuals and white-collars (x-axis); and by Labour vote percentage less Nationalist vote percentage (y-axis). The slope of the regression line confirms a positive association between Nationalist voting and farmer proportions that was indicated by statistical

**Figure 7-4: Polling Places by Percentage Farmer Plus Farm Worker Less Percentage Manual Plus White-collar, and by Percentage Labour Less Percentage Nationalist Vote, Marsden Electorate 1935 (N = 62)**



correlation—in other words, polling places with higher proportions of farmers tended to have higher proportions of Nationalist votes. The plot indicates that 52 polling places were dominated by the farmer / farm worker alignment, against nine dominated by manuals / white-collars. Because the 52 polling places were typically small, Nationalists did not gain a commensurate share of the electorate vote—52 farmer-dominated polling places contributed 4 461 votes, but nine manual-dominated polling places contributed 5 626 votes.

The balance of votes in the upper right and lower left quadrants indicates that cross-party voting favoured Labour: 22 polling places with a farmer–farm worker majority gave the majority of their votes to Labour, but only five polling places with a manual–white-collar majority gave most of their votes to the Nationalists. The advantage to Labour was 220 votes. Twenty-two (generally smaller) farmer-dominated polling places gave 1 131 votes to Labour and 498 to Nationalists, and five (generally larger) manual-dominated polling places gave Nationalists 620 votes and 498 to Labour; combining the respective party's votes gave Labour 1 629 votes to Nationalists' 1 409. The balance of 220 votes favoured Labour.

Cross-party voting affected both major parties, although the incidence of erstwhile Labour voters choosing conservative is often underestimated. A difference of 220 votes is appreciable in this particular electorate where Labour's winning margin was 347 votes.

### *Population changes*

Table 7–4 shows differences in occupational composition between the general and supplementary rolls. A higher influx of manuals,<sup>242</sup> together with the occupational profile of electors deleted from the general roll, indicates that, not unexpectedly, manuals were the most transient of the four occupational categories.<sup>243</sup> During the depression years from 1931 to 1935, twice as many Labour-aligned manuals and white-collars (736), rather than farmers and farm workers (353), were added to the Marsden electoral roll. White-collars retained their general roll proportion, farm workers increased slightly (by 1.4 percentage points), and farmers slipped behind manual workers as the single largest occupational category.

<sup>242</sup> Farm workers had the highest *rate* of transience but four times as many manuals were added to the roll.

<sup>243</sup> The 425 deletions—of whom 48.2 percent were male—from the general roll comprised 80 manuals (40.8 percent of deleted male entries), 57 white-collars (29.1 percent), 47 farmers (24.0 percent), and 12 farm workers (6.1 percent). The balance of 14 males consisted of those listed on the roll as 'retired'.

**Table 7–4: Composition of Four Male Occupational Categories, Marsden Electorate 1935.**

	<i>Farmer</i>	<i>Farm worker</i>	<i>Manual</i>	<i>White-collar</i>	<i>Total</i>
General roll	1 791	197	1 693	969	4 650
Percent	38.5	4.2	36.4	20.8	99.9
Supplementary roll	229	124	511	225	1 089
Percent	21.0	11.4	46.9	20.7	100.0
Total roll	2 020	321	2 204	1 194	5 739
Percent	35.2	5.6	38.4	20.8	100.0
Percentage increase 1931–1935	12.8	62.9	30.2	23.2	23.4

### ***Higher voter turnout***

The proxy measure used here is a comparison of percentage vote increases at polling places between 1931 and 1935. Polling places won by Labour showed average increases of 27.5 percent, whereas those won by Nationalists increased by an average of 26.4 percent: this is not an appreciable difference.

### ***Research hypotheses***

*Hypothesis 1: more farmers voted Labour than Nationalist (the ‘strong farmer claim’); or, sufficient farmers voted Labour to give Labour the electorate (the weak farmer claim).*

The ‘strong farmer’ claim is not supported. There is some support for the weak hypothesis—some farmers voted Labour—but manuals (and some white-collars) voting Nationalist largely cancels out this effect.

*Hypothesis 2: farm workers voted Labour.*

Marsden data provide no evidence that farm workers generally voted Labour. Instead, their positive association with Nationalist voting, (and, in the case of farm workers’ small numbers in urban areas, with Democrat voting) are good evidence for the opposite tendency.

*Hypothesis 3: white-collar workers voted Labour.*

This category associated positively with Labour voting—more so in urban areas where most white-collars lived.

*Hypothesis 4: minor parties took votes disproportionately from the Nationalists.*

This claim is supported by Marsden data. Farmers and farm workers were the Nationalist-aligned occupational categories: both categories—urban and rural-dwelling in the case of farmers; urban-dwelling only in the case of farm workers—correlated positively with Democrat voting. However, the force of this finding is countered by evidence that Labour-aligned urban manuals, the single largest sub-group of occupations, also correlated positively with Democrat voting. Although both major parties lost votes to the Democrat candidate, Labour lost more than did Nationalists: this is conclusively demonstrated by Nationalist-aligned farmers and farm workers having insufficient numbers to generate all Nationalist votes, even if none of them voted for the Democrat candidate. Some manuals and / or white-collars must have made up the shortfall of Nationalist votes.

*Hypothesis 5: changes in rural electorates' occupational profiles during the depression favoured the Labour party.*

Marsden data support this hypothesis. Manuals supplanted farmers as the largest male occupational category.

*Hypothesis 6: higher voter turnout benefited Labour in 1935*

The data are unclear on this question.

**Conclusion**

In 1935, Marsden presents as a typical rural electorate in indicators such as occupational composition, third-party vote, proportion of polling places won by Labour, percentage of new voters, and voter turnout. Structurally, there are no obvious reasons why correlations between occupations and party voting were relatively weak. Nevertheless, the contest in the Marsden electorate featured five defining characteristics: firstly, manuals supplanted farmers as the single largest occupational category; secondly, a minor parties' vote of 7.1 percent was comfortably ahead of Labour's winning margin, and clearly affected Nationalist chances; thirdly, cross-party votes came from both Labour and Nationalists; fourthly, Labour's success in urban areas—particularly in Whangarei—provided a necessary buffer of votes; and fifthly, the election was Labour's to lose because it had the majority of aligned voters: manuals and white-collar workers. Had Nationalists won, they could only have done so with support from outside their farmer and farm worker supporters.

## Chapter 8: The Manawatu Electorate 1935

### *Introduction*

In 1935, the Manawatu electorate—compared with most other electorates in this study—was characterised by such features as relative compactness, rapid population growth during the 1930s depression, relatively high urbanisation,<sup>244</sup> Labour's smallest vote margin, a five-way contest with the highest minor party vote, and Nationalist voting that was approximately half what the Coalition's vote had been in 1931.

Firstly, Manawatu was a relatively small rural electorate situated on the southern west coast of the North Island. It had only 33 polling places, the lowest number in these 10 electorates, compared with the median of 52 polling places in the 10 electorates studied in this thesis.<sup>245</sup> The Representation Commission assessed Manawatu's population as 85 percent rural dwellers—the median of the 10 cases was 80 percent—although this will prove no guide to percentages of farmers in the electorate.

Secondly, Manawatu's population showed rapid growth during the depression. Between the censuses of 1926 and 1936, Manawatu's population increased by just 1.4 percent. Nevertheless, between 1931 and 1935 registered electors increased by 6.6 percent, and total votes leapt by 19.3 percent. The increase in votes reflects the compounding effect of roll increases and voter turnout, which rose by 10 percentage points to 91.4 percent of registered electors in 1935. Analysis of the electoral roll indicates disproportionate increases to the four occupational categories such that by 1935, there were more manual workers than farmers on the electoral roll.<sup>246</sup>

Thirdly, this 'rural' electorate was more urbanised than others in this study except Thames. The largest five towns were Levin, with 18.5 percent of the vote; Foxton, with 11.3 percent; Shannon, with 9.1

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<sup>244</sup> The text reveals the high proportion of total electorate votes cast in the largest five polling places.

<sup>245</sup> The mean is 58 polling places.

<sup>246</sup> Nevertheless, Chapman classified it as a 'farmer' electorate.

percent; Bulls, with 8.0 percent; and Awahuri, with 6.4 percent.<sup>247</sup> The top five polling places contributed 53.3 percent of the total electorate vote.

Fourthly, Labour's margin of 29 votes was exceeded by all three of the minor parties. The total minor party vote was 30.3 percent, narrowly surpassing Tauranga's total.<sup>248</sup> Fifthly, the Nationalist camp failed to retain voters: in 1931, J. Linklater (Coalition), with 65.8 percent of the valid vote, won a two-cornered contest from C. L. Hunter (Labour), on 34.2 percent. In 1935, Linklater (now a Nationalist) lost by 0.3 percent—29 votes—to Hunter's 35 percent. The balance of the former Coalition vote was split between S. J. E. Closey (Independent), with 15.0 percent; M. H. Oram (Democrat), with 8.0 percent; and J. K. Hornblow (Independent), on 7.3 percent.<sup>249</sup>

### *Voting analysis*

Figure 8–1 plots party votes across 29 polling places. Trend lines suggest that Nationalists lost votes to Closey, because the two trend lines converge towards the right of the plot where polling places were smaller and generally more rural. That is, Nationalist votes tended to decrease when Closey's vote increased. Labour's trend line, on the other hand, runs virtually parallel with that of Closey.

Table 8–1 reveals that not all polling places were keenly contested, as a close overall vote might suggest. The largest three polling places—worth 38.8 percent of electorate votes—gave Labour 1 504 votes to Nationalists' 660. Labour won only eight polling places in all—excluding two polling places drawn with Nationalists—but in the process took 1 001 more votes than the Nationalists. For their part, the Nationalists won 18 polling places in equally convincing fashion, taking 1 875 votes to 861. In all, Labour won barely more than one-quarter of the polling places; Nationalists, on the other hand, won well over half. In this sense, Labour cannot be said to have penetrated the rural areas outside towns and townships.

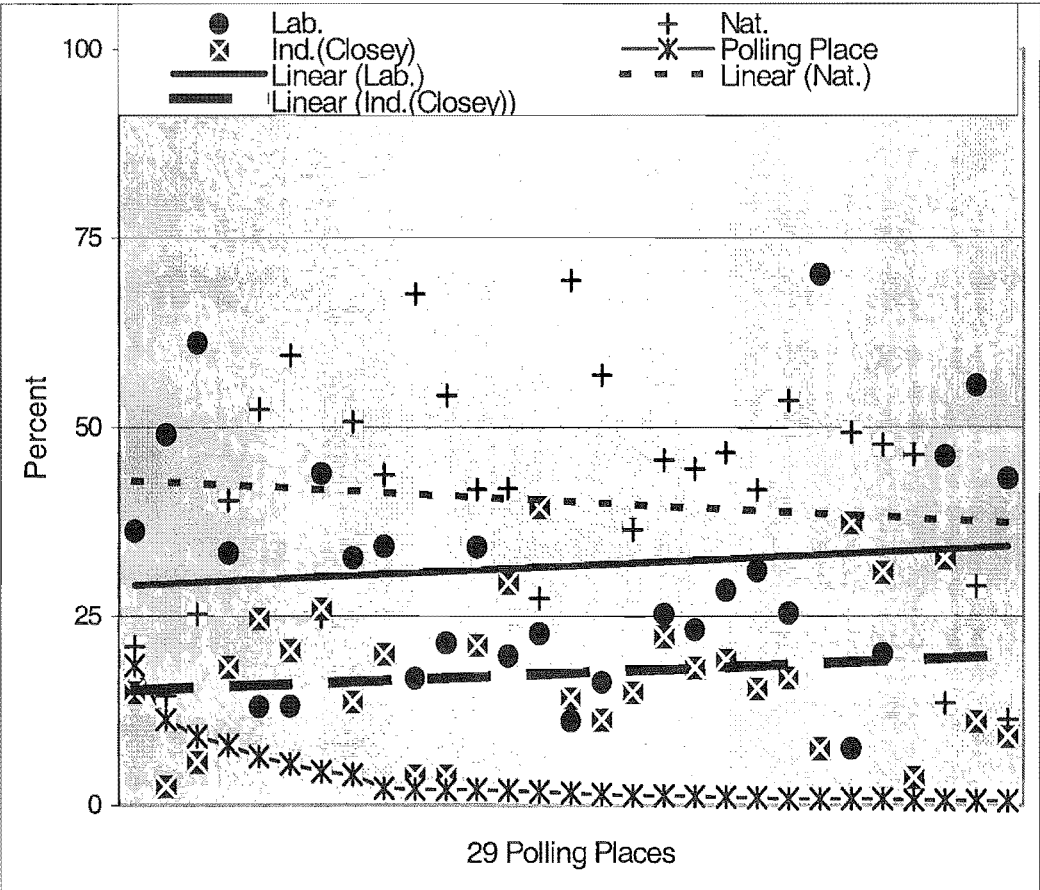
<sup>247</sup> Awahuri, The Hall (179 votes); Awahuri, Kauwhata factory (144 votes); and Awahuri Road (220 votes) were aggregated because there was insufficient information in the electoral rolls to locate Awahuri voters to their nearest polling place. Similarly, Carnavon, School (93 votes); and Carnavon, Clydesdale School (97 votes) were aggregated. In addition, the polling place of Poroutawhao (120 votes) was excluded because it had no entries on the electoral roll. Accordingly, Manawatu electorate's 33 official polling places reduced to 29 in this database.

<sup>248</sup> Tauranga was another five-way contest with a total minor party vote of 30.2 percent.

<sup>249</sup> Intriguingly, none of the candidates appear on the 1935 electoral roll.



Figure 8-1: Polling Places by Decreasing Percentage of Electorate Vote and by Percentage of Labour, Nationalist, and Independent Votes, Manawatu Electorate 1935 (N = 29)



Note: for clarity, only the three main contenders are plotted.

Table 8-1: Party Votes in Four Polling Place Groupings, Manawatu Electorate 1935

Polling Places	<i>Labour</i>	<i>Nationalist</i>	<i>Democrat</i>	<i>Indep. (Closey)</i>	<i>Indep. (Linklater)</i>	<i>Total</i>
8 Labour-won	1 786	785	432	432	437	3 872
18 Nationalist-won	861	1 875	181	696	121	3 734
Levin	566	328	338	234	94	1 560
Electorate	2 958	2 929	676	1 271	618	8 452

The minor-party vote appears to have been decisive in the election result. As indicated above, Labour polled just 0.8 percentage points fewer votes in than they had in 1931; Nationalists, on the other hand, polled 31.1 percentage points fewer. The conclusion seems inescapable: minor parties obtained their votes from conservative voters, benefiting the Labour party in the process. Nevertheless, these are net voting shifts that may conceal gross shifts—cross-party voting—in both directions.

More important, however, is the ‘reciprocity’ evident between Labour and Nationalist voting. Labour’s dominant share of the relatively few large polling places was matched by Nationalists’ dominant share of the 18 remaining polling places. Across 26 polling places won either by Labour or by Nationalists, just 13 votes separated the parties. Crucial to the election outcome, therefore, were special votes,<sup>250</sup> which Labour won from the Nationalists by 185 to 113. Labour’s share of special votes (36.1 percent) exceeded its electorate vote by 1.1 percentage points, but Nationalists’ share of specials (27.2 percent) was 7.5 percentage points fewer than their electorate vote.

### *Polling place occupational profile*

Figure 8–2 substitutes occupational category proportions for voting data. Outside the larger polling places, percentages of farmers quickly exceed percentages of manual workers.<sup>251</sup> In a similar way, percentages of farm workers quickly exceed percentages of white-collar workers. The gradient of the trend lines indicates that the pattern of Labour voting evident in figure 8–1 is replicated in the distribution of manuals and white-collars; namely, a tendency for Labour votes to decrease along with a smaller polling place vote share. Conversely, the pattern of Nationalist voting—an increase in proportions as polling places decrease in vote numbers—is replicated in the distribution of farmers. Farm workers’ trend line shows only a slight tendency towards higher proportions, as do those of farmers.

Distribution patterns of the four occupational categories suggest positive associations between Labour voting and manuals; and between Nationalist voting and farmers. White-collars aligned with manual workers, and farm workers aligned with farmers.

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<sup>250</sup> These 415 votes, 4.9 percent of the electorate total, were ‘Absent, declaration, postal, and seamen’s votes’.

<sup>251</sup> Most manual workers had the generic description of ‘labourer’; exceptions were flax workers, in the main located at Foxton (36 workers), Shannon (31) and Bulls (24). Flax workers are not separately enumerated in the data analysis because there were only 124 altogether, comprising three percent of the male roll.

Figure 8–2: Polling Places by Decreasing Percentage of Electorate Vote and by Percentages of Four Male Occupational Categories, Manawatu Electorate 1935 (N = 29)

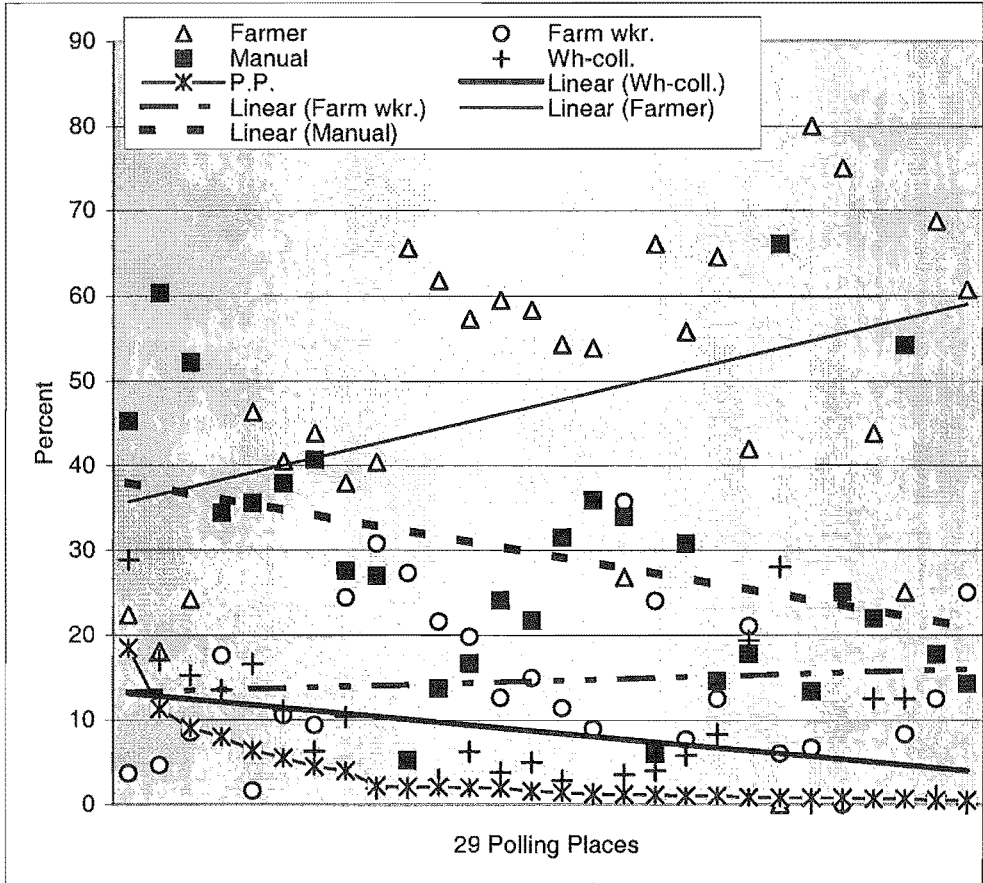


Table 8–2 compares polling place percentages of male electors in their four categories. The eight Labour-won polling places contain almost twice the number of manuals as farmers; and more than

Table 8–2: Percentage of Male Electors in Four Polling Place Groupings, Manawatu Electorate 1935

Polling Places	<i>Farmer</i>	<i>Farm worker</i>	<i>Manual</i>	<i>White-collar</i>	<i>Total</i>
8 Labour-won	25.0	6.0	49.0	20.0	100.0
18 Nationalist-won	46.5	17.5	26.9	9.2	100.0
Levin	22.3	3.7	45.2	28.8	100.0
Electorate	35.6	11.5	38.2	14.7	100.0

three times the number of white-collar workers as farm workers. Conversely, Nationalist-won polling places contain nearly twice as many farmers as manuals; and about twice as many farm workers as white-collar workers. In the largest urban area—Levin—almost one-third of the male electors were white-collars; almost half were manual workers; farmers were less than one-quarter; and farm workers were almost non-existent. Across this rural electorate, manuals outnumbered farmers and white-collar workers outnumbered farm workers.

### *Correlations between occupation and party vote*

Table 8–3 sets out statistical correlations between the four occupational category proportions and party vote proportions. Farmers associate positively (.49) with Nationalist voting and negatively with Labour voting (at a solid  $-.60$ , this is the strongest coefficient in the table). Increasing proportions of farmers are associated with decreasing proportions of Nationalist votes. Farm workers have the same direction of associations as farmers, although the coefficients are weaker in all cases. The exception is that farm workers correlate negatively with voting for Closey, preferring instead the Nationalist candidate.

**Table 8–3: Polling Place Correlations between Proportions of Four Male Occupational Categories and Party Vote Proportions, Manawatu Electorate, 1935 (N = 29)**

	<i>Farmer</i>	<i>Farm worker</i>	<i>Manual</i>	<i>White-collar</i>
Labour	–.60	–.11	.57	.42
Nationalist	.49	.29	–.56	–.40
Democrat	–.17	–.09	.11	.30
Indep. (Closey)	.29	–.22	–.13	–.20
Indep. (Hornblow)	–.13	–.06	.15	.08

Manuals, with the strongest coefficients in the table, were least likely to deviate from their party of choice. Manuals correlate positively with Labour (.57), positively—but weakly—with both Democrats (.11) and Hornblow (.15); and negatively with both Nationalists (–.56) and Closey (–.13). White-collar workers show the same direction of association as that of manuals in all five instances, although three of the white-collars' coefficients are weaker than manuals' coefficients: with Labour voting (.42); with

Nationalist voting (−.40); and with voting for Hornblow (.08).<sup>252</sup> White-collars’ association with Democrats (.30) was somewhat stronger than that of manuals’ (.11), and so too—to a lesser extent—was white-collars’ association with Closey (−.20). This evidence supports the claim that manuals and white-collars constituted a voting alignment with Labour, but not claims for a voting alignment between farmers, farm workers, and manual workers that features in the historiography.

*Partial correlations*

Table 8–4 sets out the original, zero-order correlations between occupations and party votes, along with partial correlations that control for voting for Closey, the strongest minor party contender.

**Table 8–4: Zero-order and Partial Polling Place Correlations between Proportions of Four Occupational Categories and Proportions of Labour and Nationalist Votes, Manawatu Electorate 1935**

	<i>Labour</i>		<i>Nationalist</i>	
	Zero-order	Partial	Zero-order	Partial
Farmer	--	--	.49	.51
Farm worker	--	--	.29	.30
Manual	.57	.57	--	--
White-collar	.42	.38	--	--

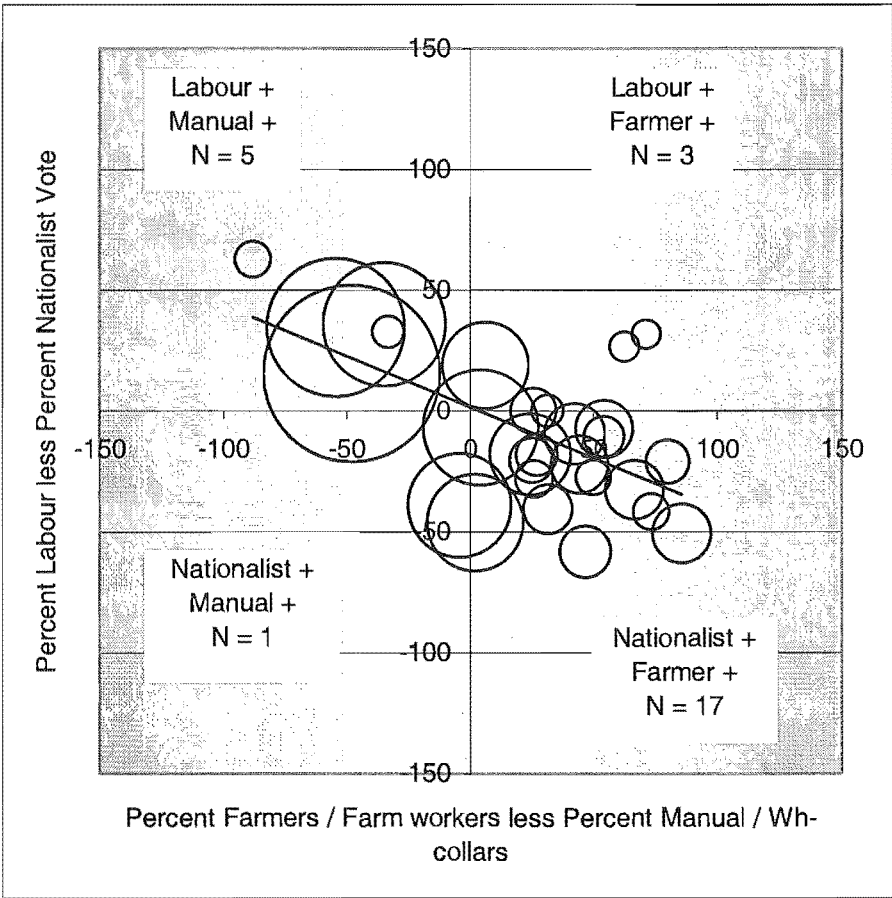
Results indicate that original relationships are largely unaffected when effects of Closey’s votes are removed. Manuals’ correlation with Labour is unchanged (.57); white-collars’ correlation with Labour weakens by four one-hundredths, suggesting that Closey’s votes intervene—to a very small degree—in the original relationship. Both farmer and farm worker correlations with Nationalist voting appear to strengthen when effects of voting for Closey are removed, although the difference is negligible. Nevertheless, these data confirm that manuals were least swayed by other voting choices.

<sup>252</sup> This is effectively a zero-correlation.

*Distribution of votes and occupational categories*

Figure 8–3 plots each polling place by percent Labour vote less percent Nationalist vote, and by percent farmers / farm workers less percent manual / white-collar worker. Occupational categories are combined because of similar directions of association indicated above.

**Figure 8–3: Polling Places by Percent Farmer / Farm worker Less Percent Manual / White-collar, and by Percent Labour Less Percent Nationalist Vote, Manawatu Electorate 1935 (N = 29)**



Note: Text boxes total 26 because two polling places have the same proportion on one axis, and one polling place (Glen Ourua) was not won by either Labour or Nationalists.

The plot shows the polarity of a few large urban areas dominated by manual workers balanced against a larger number of small polling places dominated by farmers. The downward slope of the regression line shows that, in the main, higher numbers of farmers are associated with higher numbers of Nationalist votes. A limitation of the bubble chart, however, is that it takes no account of minor-party votes. Thus, it appears that one polling place (Awahuri) in the lower left quadrant had more manuals / white-collar workers than farmers / farm workers but voted Nationalist. Awahuri's occupational profile was 43 manuals, 20 white-

collars, 56 farmers and two farm workers; close to an even balance. More importantly, Awahuri cast 134 votes for Closey, almost double the 71 votes for Labour: Awahuri was not a Labour–Nationalist contest. Moreover, three polling places—with more farmers than manuals—appear to have voted Labour (Makerua, Marotiri, and Tokomaru). Makerua, admittedly, is a bona fide case of a farmer-dominated, Labour-voting polling place—the *sole* bona fide case—with a 55.6 percent vote for Labour and with 68.8 percent farmers. Marotiri, on the other hand, had nearly twice as many farm workers as manuals, and Tokomaru gave more votes to Closey than to the Nationalists.

Levin and Foxton, the two largest polling places, totalled 2 515 votes (29.8 percent of the total). In Levin, Labour won 566 votes to Nationalists’ 328, and Oram, the Democrat candidate, took 338. In Foxton, Labour won 468 votes and Nationalists slumped to 138, when Hornblow took 307. Hornblow’s remarkable stand in Foxton exceeded his performance in the rest of the polling places combined, as did Oram’s performance in Levin. Either polling place may have cost Nationalists a win in Manawatu: had the mean percentage of votes that the Nationalists attracted across all polling places (40 percent) also applied in either Foxton or Levin, the Nationalist candidate would have received an additional 244 votes or 296 votes respectively, easily enough for victory.

*Population changes*

As mentioned earlier, the four occupational categories contributed unevenly to Manawatu’s increase in voters. Table 8–5 sets out differences between general and supplementary electoral rolls as a measure of occupational profile change in Manawatu during the depression. In particular, manual

**Table 8–5: Percentages of Male Electors in Four Occupational Categories on the General and Supplementary Electoral Rolls, Manawatu Electorate 1935**

	<i>Farmer</i>	<i>Farm worker</i>	<i>Manual</i>	<i>White-collar</i>	<i>Total</i>
General roll	39.3	9.3	36.1	15.4	100.1
Supp. Roll	20.1	20.6	47.5	11.8	100.0
Electorate	35.6	11.5	38.2	14.7	100.0
Change 1931–1935	–3.7	2.2	2.1	–0.7	N/A

workers supplanted farmers as the largest occupational category during the depression. When the general roll closed on 29 July 1935, the four male occupations stood at: farmers, 39.3 percent of males; farm workers, 9.3 percent; manuals, 36.1 percent; and white-collars, 15.4 percent. After deletions and additions by way of the supplementary roll,<sup>253</sup> manuals had a small, but potentially decisive, advantage over farmers of 2.6 percentage points. A reversal from the previous election occurred because more than twice as many manuals as farmers were added to the roll: a change that had major electoral consequences because of manuals' strong correlation with Labour voting. The aggregate of (generally) Labour-voting manuals and white-collars—52.9 percent of males on the roll—was greater than the aggregate of (generally) Nationalist-voting farmers and farm workers—47.1 percent.

### *Voter turnout*

The mean increase in votes across Manawatu's polling places was 27.5 percent.<sup>254</sup> The mean percentage increase in votes between 1931 and 1935 at Labour-won polling places was 33.5 percent, 6.0 percentage points above the mean electorate increase. In other words, there was an association between Labour voting and larger numbers of voters and / or higher voter turnout. It would tend to follow, of course, that Labour-won polling places showed larger increases in votes, because such polling places generally had more manuals than farmers—this group of seven polling places had a mean manual complement of 42.3 percent, against a mean farmer complement of 34.0 percent—and manuals dominated the ranks of additional voters in 1935. Take, for example, the key polling place of Levin: its 269-vote increase—up by 20.8 percent over 1931—came from a manual / white-collar complement of 74 percent. The data strongly imply that Labour supporters cast the majority of extra votes, and support the claim that higher voter turnout was to Labour's benefit.

### *The research hypotheses*

*Hypothesis 1: the majority of farmers voted Labour (strong version); alternatively, Labour won because sufficient farmers combined with other voters (weak version).*

Neither version of this proposition is supported by Manawatu data. Correlations of occupations with party votes reveal that farmers negatively associated with Labour party voting. This conclusion accords with farmers' predominance in smaller rural polling places that strongly voted Nationalist. Only one farmer-

<sup>253</sup> There were 870 males added (a 23.8 percent increase). Of the 384 deletions from the general roll, 54 percent were male, and of the males 19.2 percent were farmers; two percent were farm workers; 53.8 percent were manual workers; and 23.1 percent were white-collars. The balance was made up of Not Otherwise Described individuals.

<sup>254</sup> For consistency, the same aggregations have been made as those listed earlier in this chapter. Two polling places from the 1931 roll were absent from the 1935 roll—Makowhai (75 votes) and Paroutawhao (68 votes). There was one new polling place for 1935—Tangimoana (52 votes). Only two polling places showed a loss—Greatford, with a vote loss of 2.8 percent; and Parewanui, with a loss of 11.6 percent.



dominated polling place showed a clear-cut Labour vote; generally, farmers were poorly represented in polling places that voted Labour, but strongly represented in polling places that voted for the Nationalists.

*Hypothesis 2: farm workers voted Labour.*

Manawatu data do not support this hypothesis. Like farmers, Manawatu's farm workers were better represented in rural areas that predominantly voted Nationalist, and they show positive correlations with Nationalist voting and negative correlations with Labour voting. By both measures, farm workers were politically aligned with farmers.

*Hypothesis 3: white-collar workers voted Labour.*

Manawatu data support this hypothesis. Firstly, white-collar workers were much better represented in larger, more urban polling places where Labour voting held sway. Secondly, correlations between proportions of white-collars and party vote proportions show a similar pattern to those of manual workers—positively associated with Labour voting and negatively associated with Nationalist voting.

*Hypothesis 4: minor parties took votes disproportionately from the Nationalists.*

The Manawatu electorate's data provide good evidence that Nationalists bore the brunt of vote losses to minor parties. The predominant minor party was Closey, the Independent, with whom farmers positively correlated. In consequence, voting for Closey appears to have diluted farmers' correlation with Nationalists, leaving the way open for Labour. A plot of party votes revealed that trend lines of Nationalist voting and of voting for Closey tended to converge, suggesting that the same voter sections tended to support both of those parties.

*Hypothesis 5: changes in rural electorates' occupational profiles during the depression favoured the Labour party.*

Manawatu electorate data support this claim: during the depression manuals replaced farmers as the largest male occupational category. However, the fact that manuals and white-collar workers comprised perhaps 51.5 percent of males in 1931, but Labour could only manage 34.2 percent in a two-cornered contest, is some indication that many manuals leaned towards conservative parties in rural areas. A full analysis of the 1931 roll would be needed to confirm this possibility.

*Hypothesis 6: increased voter turnout benefited Labour in 1935.*

Percentage increases in vote numbers outstripped percentage increases in electoral roll numbers, implying that higher voter turnout rather than electoral roll increases was responsible for the increase in votes. Nevertheless, Labour-won polling places registered larger increases in votes—compared with 1931—than did Nationalist-won polling places, implying that Labour benefited more than did Nationalists from higher voter turnout.

*Conclusion*

The Manawatu constituency resembled other test cases in several respects. Manual and white-collar workers preferred the Labour party, while farmers and farm workers just as definitely favoured the Nationalists. Population changes altered the occupational profile of the electorate to one that favoured the Labour party: manual workers increased during the depression to the extent that they narrowly outnumbered farmers. Manuals were concentrated in a few urbanised polling places that had a high proportion of the total electorate vote, and these few large polling places established a vote margin for Labour that offset the party's losses—admittedly small—in rural areas.

These were clear structural advantages for Labour in a very close contest that saw the party maintain its 1931 vote share in the face of minor-party competition, and win a crucial number of special votes. If Manawatu had remained structurally similar in 1935 to what it had been in 1931, then the election would have been Nationalists' to lose. As it was, however, changes during the depression favoured the Labour party, making it therefore Labour's contest to lose: its more strongly aligned voters ensured that did not happen.

## Chapter 9: The Hauraki Electorate 1935

### *Introduction*

The Hauraki electorate encompassed intensive dairying areas of the Hauraki Plains as well as urban concentrations of population such as Papatoetoe and Otahuhu, which had particular electoral significance because of railway workshops with concentrations of manual workers. The Representation Commission assessed Hauraki as having a 75 percent rural population in 1935, but its actual occupational profile of less than one-third farmers serves as a reminder of the heterogeneity of 'rural' electorates.

Hauraki's 48 polling places ranged from Moumoukai with 13 votes to Otahuhu, Public School, with 1 941 votes.<sup>255</sup> Concentration of voters in a few large urban areas saw four polling areas total 6 693 votes, or 57 percent of the electorate vote. They were: Otahuhu, with two polling places and 25.2 percent of electorate votes; Papatoetoe, with two polling places and 16.3 percent; Mangere, with three polling places and 11.7 percent; and Howick, with one polling place and 3.9 percent of the vote. The database comprises 42 polling places.<sup>256</sup>

The 1931 election, fought between the Coalition's W. W. Massey, a farmer from Mangere, and Labour's C. R. Petrie, a storekeeper from Otahuhu, was won comfortably by Massey with a margin of 2 750 votes—an emphatic victory that emphasised the conservative nature of the electorate at that time. In contrast, the 1935 election was a three-cornered contest between Massey (now a Nationalist); Petrie; and the Democratic party's S. Rickards, an auctioneer from Mangere. Labour took the seat by 544 votes, and improved on its 1931 vote share by 4.7 percentage points, despite the presence of the third party. Nationalist votes fell by a massive 23.9 percentage points, and Democrats' 14 percent share of the vote was creditable: there had been no third party presence in 1931, and minor parties averaged 11.1 percent in the other farmer electorates of this study.

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<sup>255</sup> Although the two Otahuhu polling places aggregated to 2 955 votes.

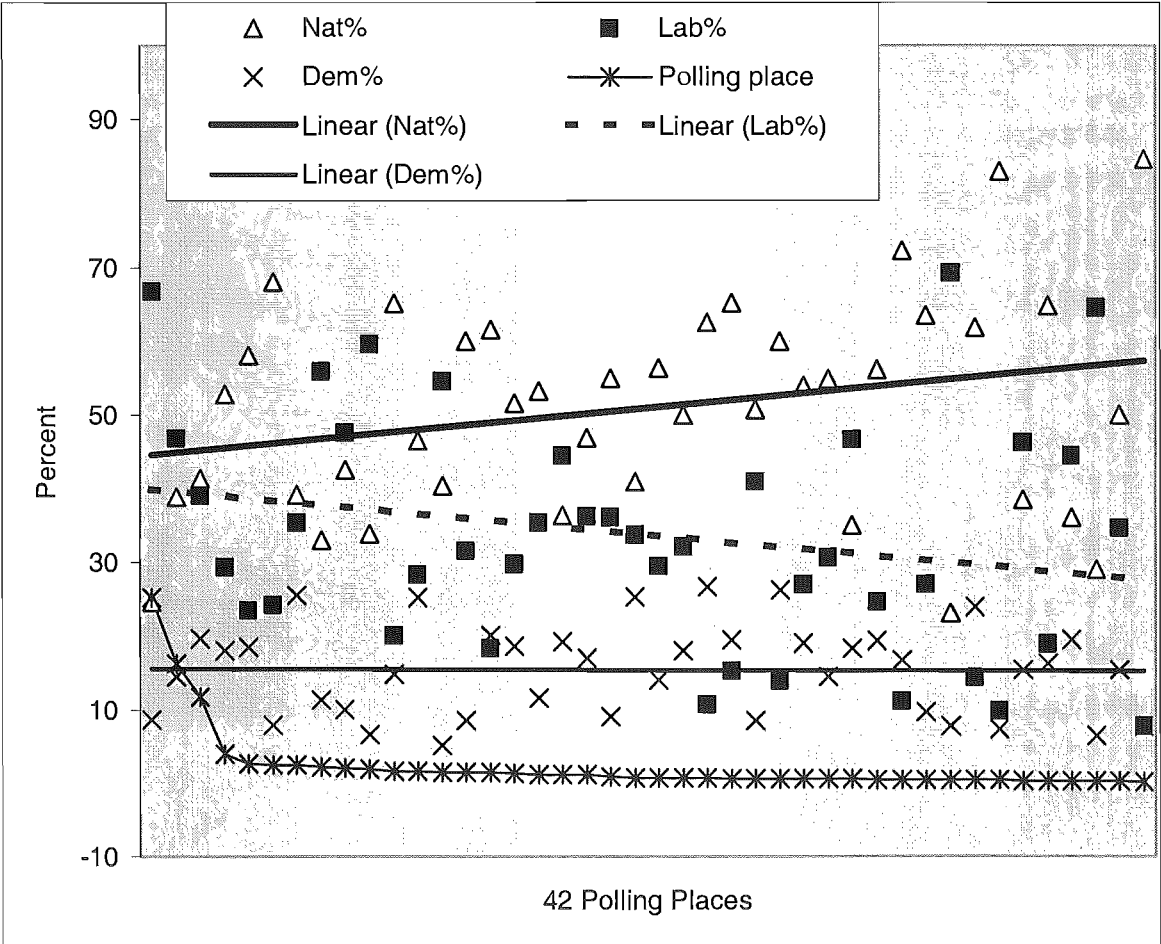
<sup>256</sup> Polling places were aggregated because of insufficient information on the electoral rolls to reliably assign voters to their closest polling places. This also applied to Clevedon and Clevedon North. Te Hopai had no entries on the electoral roll.

Labour won with 44.6 percent of the vote, winning most votes at 12 of the 42 database polling places (28.6 percent), and beaten into third place in three. Nationalists won the balance of 30 polling places. The Labour-won 12 polling places contributed 52.2 of the electorate vote.

*Polling place occupational profile*

Figure 9–1 sets out polling place vote data. Hauraki exemplifies the general voting characteristics of the

**Figure 9–1: Polling Places by Decreasing Percentage of Electorate Vote and by Percentages of Three Parties' Votes, Hauraki Electorate 1935 (N = 42)**



nine Labour-voting electorates in this study. To the left of the plot are urban areas with most votes dominated by the Labour party. The first two polling places have high proportions of Labour votes, but the voting profile of the polling places then changes to one of Nationalist domination that strengthens across the remainder of the electorate. The plot appears straightforward: data points for the party votes

tend not to be entangled with each other, nor do trend lines intersect: there may have been little cross-party voting by Labour or Nationalist-aligned occupations. Overall, the plot is segregated into three layers, with Nationalist voting percentages at the top, Labour percentages in the middle, and Democrat percentages at the bottom. The Democrat trend line is quite flat; indicating that the party’s share of the vote changed little from urban to rural areas. Nationalist vote percentages characteristically rise as polling places become progressively smaller, the opposite tendency to the Labour vote. Only a few Labour-won polling places appear in the more rural areas, showing the importance of urban areas in Labour’s electoral performance.

Table 9–1 sets out more detailed voting data. In the 12 polling places won by Labour, the party’s share was 57.7 percent, compared with an electorate share of 40.7 percent. The party performed substantially better in larger urban polling places than it did in more rural areas with much smaller polling places: 12 Labour-won polling places contributed 52.2 percent of the electorate votes, whereas Nationalists’ 30 polling places contributed 41.9 percent. The advantage to Labour was considerable—2 037 votes. In relation to Labour’s final margin of 544 votes, it is readily apparent that Labour lost heavily over the rest of the electorate.

Table 9–1: Polling Places Grouped According to Party Majority, Hauraki Electorate 1935 (N = 42)

Polling Places	<i>Labour</i>	<i>Nat.</i>	<i>Dem.</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Lab. %</i>	<i>Nat. %</i>	<i>Dem. %</i>	<i>Total</i>
12 Lab.	3 532	1 922	666	6 120	57.7	31.4	10.9	100.0
30 Nat.	1 495	2 543	876	4 914	30.4	51.8	17.8	100.0
Diff. To Lab.	2 037	−621	−210	1 206	27.3	−20.4	−6.9	N/A
Otahuhu	1 972	726	257	2 955	66.7	24.6	8.7	100.0
Electorate	5 325	4 781	1 629	11 735	40.7	45.4	13.9	100.0

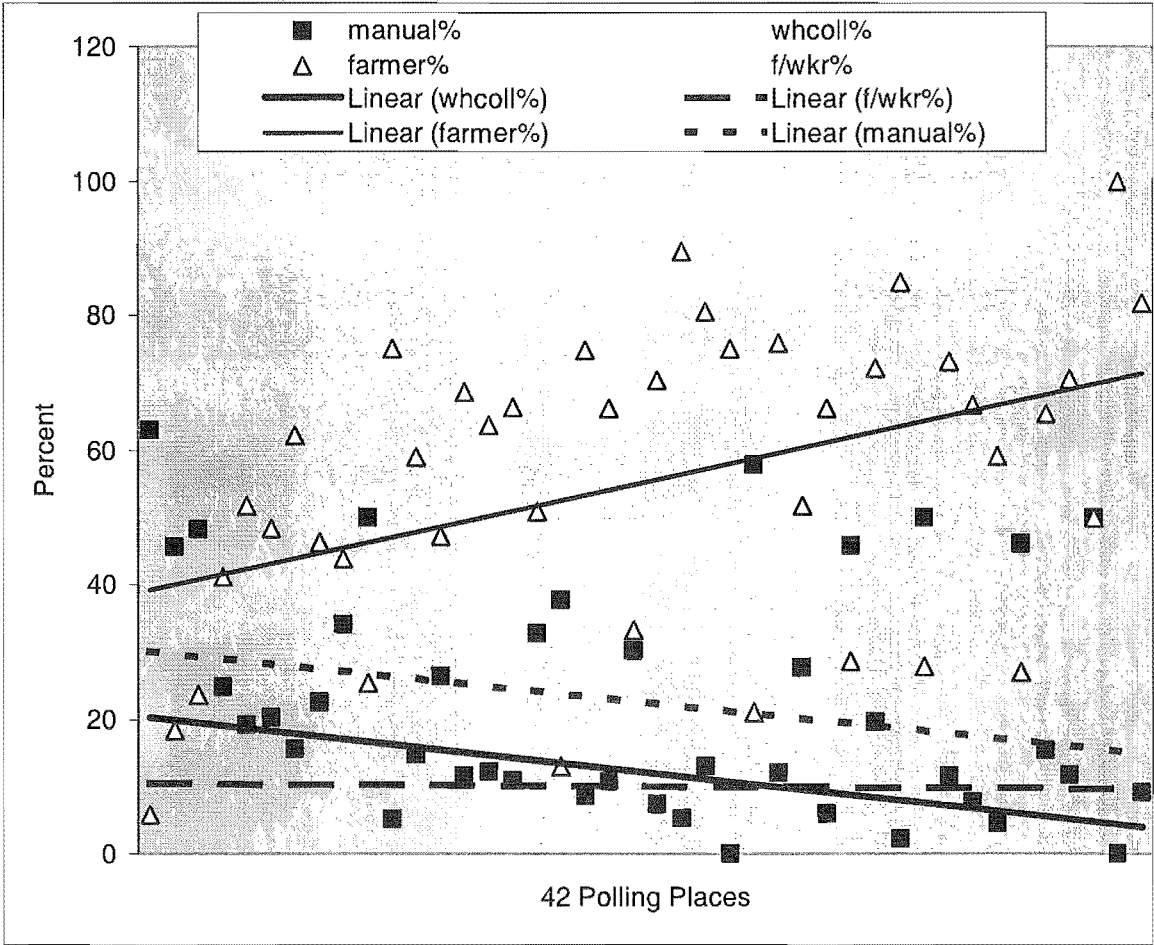
Note: the electorate total includes special votes and one deleted polling place with 21 votes.

Otahuhu was Labour’s salvation, with a 1246-vote advantage over Nationalists. Labour’s margin over Nationalists at just one of Otahuhu’s two polling places—Public Hall, 791 votes—exceeded Labour’s 544-vote electorate margin.

*Polling place occupational profile*

As noted, manual workers outnumbered farmers in Hauraki, one of Chapman’s ‘farmer’ electorates. Many of the manuals listed generic descriptions such as ‘labourer’, but there were many instances of ‘railway worker’, ‘factory worker’ (butter or cheese), ‘timber worker’ and ‘fisherman’. The proportion of manuals in the Hauraki electorate (39.4 percent) exceeds the proportion of manuals in Chapman’s ‘special country’ electorate of Raglan (38.6 percent). Farmers comprised 31.7 percent of male electors, followed by white-collar workers on 22.1 percent, and farm workers on 6.8 percent.

**Figure 9-2: Polling Places by Decreasing Percentage of Electorate Vote and by Percentage of Four Male Occupational Categories, Hauraki Electorate 1935 (N = 42)**



Note: trend lines but not data points are displayed for white-collar workers and farm workers.

Together with previous data, figure 9–2 indicates that larger polling places tended to be dominated by manuals, white-collar workers, and Labour votes. One would expect that relatively large urban areas—even in ‘rural’ electorates—would have a more extensive business and social infrastructure and, therefore, relatively more white-collar workers than smaller, more rural areas of the electorate. The Hauraki electorate, with urbanised areas like Otahuhu and Papatoetoe, had the highest proportion of white-collars of all 10 electorates in this thesis, 5.1 percentage points above the mean. Proportions of manuals exceeded the mean by 1.4 percentage points, but farmers fell 2.3 percentage points below the mean. Hauraki’s 6.8 percent farm workers fell 3.2 percentage points below the mean of the 10 electorates.

Figure 9–2 chiefly demonstrates the tendency of farmer proportions to increase steadily outside urban areas. Labour took most votes in urban areas, where farmer proportions were at their lowest. There is very little evidence so far that farmers voted Labour. In addition, the plot shows that manual and white-collar proportions decrease in step outside urban areas. Hauraki shows every sign of being a rural electorate whose electoral contest was largely decided in its few disproportionately large polling places.

### *Correlations*

Table 9–3 sets out correlations between occupational proportions and party voting across 42 database polling places.<sup>257</sup> Overall, farmer proportions correlate strongly (.67) with Nationalist voting proportions, with a similar strength of association (.76) between manual workers and Labour. Farm workers (.26) and white-collar workers (.40) aligned with Nationalist and Labour respectively, although white-collars show a zero-correlation with Democrat voting that implies some Democrat votes came from white-collars, although this did not happen systematically. The combined proportion of manuals and white-collars was 61.5 percent; yet, Labour’s vote margin was just 4.6 percent. The two Nationalist-aligned occupational categories of farmers and farm workers comprise 38.5 percent of the males and Nationalists won 40.7 percent of the vote. It appears that the manual–white-collar alignment supported Nationalists to some degree.

The coefficients in parentheses derive from the four larger, more urbanised polling places. With some qualification, these coefficients indicate that rural and urban voters reacted differently.<sup>258</sup> Farmers living in the more urban areas show a strong association (.79) with Democrat voting. Farm workers living in the same urban areas were also significantly associated (.96) with Democrat voting and thus continue their voting alignment with farmers. The most urbanised manual workers were more polarised in voting

<sup>257</sup> The Te Hopai polling place (21 votes) was excluded from the analysis because it had no electoral roll entries listed. Forty-one male roll entries were excluded because their listed address was ambiguous. Data from Clevedon, Otahuhu and Papatoetoe (two polling places each) were aggregated because of ambiguity in the electoral roll addresses, leaving a balance of 44 polling places.

<sup>258</sup> Interpretation of rural-urban voting behaviour is qualified by the fact that urban correlations were derived from data of four polling places.

preference, showing a stronger positive association with Labour (.92) and a stronger negative association (−.97) with Nationalist voting.

Table 9–2: Correlations between Percentage of Votes for Each Party and Percentage of Male Electors in Each Occupational Category, Hauraki Electorate 1935 (N=42)

	<i>Labour</i>	<i>Nationalist</i>	<i>Democrat</i>
Farmer	−.67 (−.96)	.67 (.98)	.18 (.79)
Farm worker	−.29 (−.91)	.26 (.85)	.14 (.96)
Manual	.76 (.92)	−.72 (−.97)	−.28 (−.69)
White-collar	.40 (.22)	−.45 (−.07)	.00 (−.53)

Note: Coefficients in parentheses derive from data of the four largest polling places.

In contrast to the overall electorate picture where manuals show a small negative correlation (−.28) with Democrats, urban manuals show a zero-correlation. Urban white-collars indicate a bias against Democrat voting (−.53) in the urban areas, and a zero-correlation at electorate level.

Table 9–2 presents a consistent picture in three important respects: firstly, each pair of the 12 sets of correlations match in their direction of association, except in the case of white-collar correlations with Democrat voting. Secondly, in all cases except one—that is, white-collars with Nationalist voting—coefficients from the four urban data are stronger than electorate level data. This is to be expected, given that electorate level data have greater variability. Thirdly, Hauraki data preserve the voting alignments—manuals and white-collars with Labour; farmers and farm workers with Nationalists—seen in other cases in this study.

The remaining question is the Democrat vote. So far, farmers and farm workers appear to be likely candidates. Partial correlations of table 9–3 indicate the probable outcome had the election been a two-cornered contest. Controlling for Democrat voting affects only white-collars, increasing their zero-order correlation with Labour from .36 to .46: interpreted as Democrat voting masking the



Table 9–3: Zero-order and Partial Correlations (Controlling for Democrat Voting) between Percentage of Votes For Labour and Nationalist Parties and Percentage of Male Electors in Four Occupational Categories, Hauraki Electorate 1935 (N = 44)

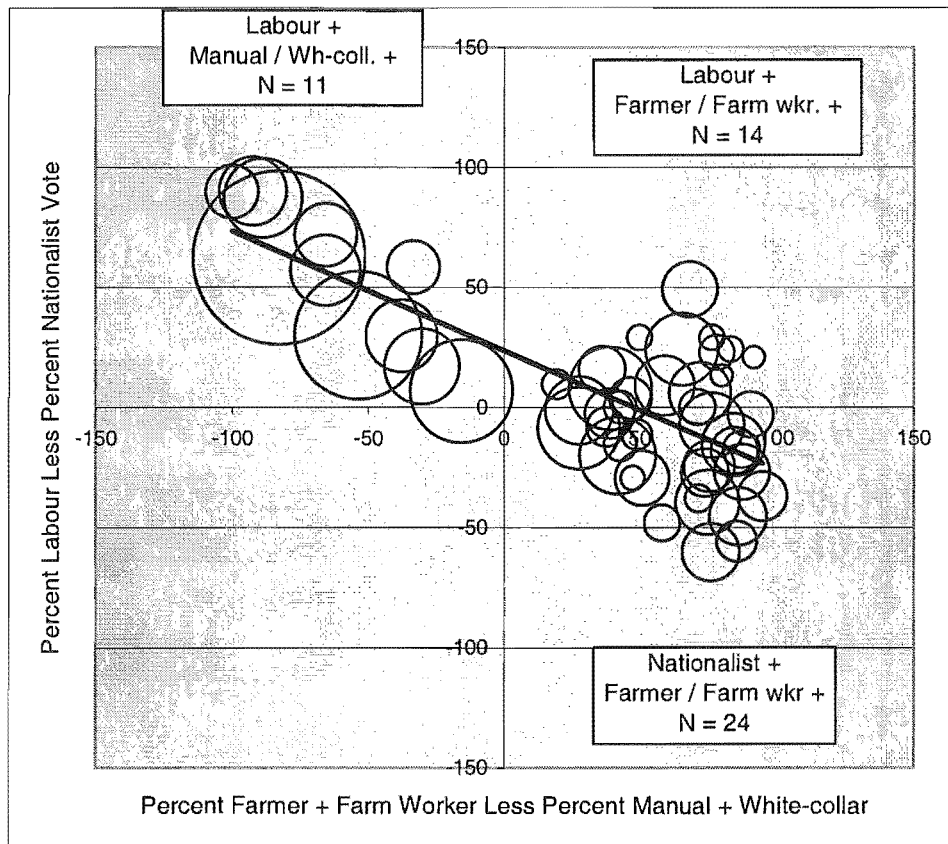
	<i>Labour</i>		<i>Nationalist</i>	
	zero-order correlations	partial correlations	zero-order correlations	partial correlations
Farmer	--	--	.65	.65
Farm worker	--	--	.29	.29
Manual	.70	.69	--	--
White-collar	.36	.46	--	--

‘true’ correlation of white-collars with Labour. In other words, partial correlations suggest that white-collars were responsible for most of Democrats’ votes, and Democrats did not take votes disproportionately from the conservatives.

*Distribution of occupations and party votes*

The bubble chart at figure 9–3 plots the percentage difference between votes for the two main parties and percentage difference between the occupational alignments of farmers with farm workers, and manuals with white-collars. The plot is a clear demonstration of alignments previously highlighted in this chapter. Hauraki is such a clear example of these relationships that little more needs to be said; but in brief, the slope of the regression line shows that higher proportions of farmers were associated with higher proportions of Nationalist, not Labour, voting. The polling places are overwhelmingly located in the quadrant weighted towards farmers and Nationalist votes. In addition, the seven polling places in the top left quadrant weighted towards manuals and Labour votes contributed 45.8 percent of all votes.

**Figure 9-3: Polling Places by Percent Farmer Plus Farm worker, Less Percent Manual Plus White-collar; and by Percent Labour Less Percent Nationalist Vote, Hauraki Electorate 1935 (N = 42)**



### *Minor party voting*

Hauraki's minor party vote exceeded Labour's winning margin. Such votes had the potential to push the electorate one way or another. In this case, analysis is simplified because minor party votes stemmed from white-collar workers. Since this occupational category associated mainly with voting for Labour in this electorate, it is unlikely that Nationalists lost votes to minor party voting.

### *Population change*

We observed earlier that between 1931 and 1935, Hauraki's registered electors increased by 9.5 percent but total votes increased by a massive 28 percent - a function of the increase in registered electors compounded by an 11 percent increase in voter turnout compared with the 1931 election. The occupational profile of new voters will reveal whether Labour or Nationalists were likely beneficiaries of the change. As in other cases, the difference between the main and supplementary rolls is used as a proxy for population changes in Hauraki between 1931 and 1935.

Analysis of the Hauraki roll shows that the four occupational categories were unevenly represented in the roll changes. Manuals comprised 45.3 percent of the new enrolments, farmers 23.7 percent, white-collars 19.5 percent, and farm workers 11.5 percent. The almost two-to-one advantage of new manual enrolments over farmers indicates an advantage to the Labour party, because of the positive association of manuals with Labour votes. Moreover, farmers lost ground between the two elections relative to other occupational categories. Despite an overall increase in numbers, farmers decreased as a proportion of male electors between 1931 and 1935 to the extent that manuals became the largest category.

### ***Voter turnout***

Most of the 48 polling places in the 1935 election results showed large increases in votes compared with the 1931 election. Thirteen polling places that voted for Labour in 1935 had a median vote increase of 46 percent; 33 polling places that voted Nationalist in 1935 showed a median vote increase of 19 percent. Admittedly, we cannot distinguish between new enrolments or higher turnout, but this provisional evidence supports the claim that polling places with higher numbers of voters in 1935 tended to favour the Labour party.

### ***Research hypotheses***

Hauraki electorate analysis supports three of six research hypotheses.

*Hypothesis 1: the majority of farmers voted Labour (strong version); alternatively, Labour won because sufficient farmers combined with other voters (weak version).*

Neither case holds in Hauraki, principally because farmers were not a sufficient voting section, even in concert with farm workers, to account for the Nationalist vote, let alone to divert votes to Labour.

*Hypothesis 2: farm workers voted Labour.*

Correlations clearly indicate that farm workers associated with Nationalist voting. Far from voting for Labour, farm workers showed no association with third-party votes.

*Hypothesis 3: white-collar workers voted Labour.*

Confirmed: white-collars' correlations with Labour were their only positive voting association.

*Hypothesis 4: minor parties took votes disproportionately from the Nationalists.*

In Hauraki electorate, white-collar workers, who otherwise voted Labour, appear to have been the main source of Democrat votes.

*Hypothesis 5: changes in rural electorates' occupational profiles during the depression favoured the Labour party.*

Hauraki data support this hypothesis: new manual worker registrations were doubled those of farmers, to the extent that manuals supplanted farmers as the largest male occupational category.

*Hypothesis 6: increased voter turnout benefited Labour.*

Provisional evidence supports this claim: Labour-voting polling places showed larger vote increases.

### ***Conclusion***

In 1935, Hauraki was a structurally different electorate than previously. In occupational profile, Hauraki became a classic Labour electorate with a majority of Labour-aligned manual workers. This is not the whole story, however; just as some manuals and / or white-collar workers supported Nationalists in 1935, the Coalition majority in 1931 suggests that higher numbers of manual and white-collar workers had voted conservative at that time. By 1935, Labour was able to reel in its recalcitrant voters: unlike Nationalists, Labour was able to maintain its vote share in 1935, despite a tendency by some of its white-collar workers to vote Democrat.

## Chapter 10: Bay of Plenty Electorate 1935

### *Introduction*

In 1935, the Bay of Plenty electorate consisted of a large part of Opotoki county, all of Matakaoa, Waikohu, Uawa, and Waipuu counties, and parts of Cook county and Wairoa county: in short, practically the whole of the East Cape area. The electorate incorporated a number of boroughs: in particular, Opotoki (population 1 257)<sup>259</sup> and Whakatane (population 1 684); as well as the township of Opunake (population 1 039). In the census period 1926–1936, parts of Bay of Plenty electorate showed very large population increases: Whakatane county, for example, increased by 81.4 percent.<sup>260</sup> The Representation Commission assessed Bay of Plenty's population as 100 percent rural, and with 91 polling places, the electorate had the highest equal complement of the 10 cases in this study.<sup>261</sup>

The Labour Party did not contest this electorate in 1931, when the Coalition's K. S. Williams was elected unopposed.<sup>262</sup> In 1935, Labour won the electorate on a minority vote in a three-cornered contest. A. G. Hultquist (an electrical engineer from Whakatane) won with 3 519 votes, 43.1 percent of the valid vote. Hultquist had a 6.8 percent margin over J. T. Merry, Nationalist (the Opotoki county clerk), with 2 964 votes and 36.3 percent. Third was Colonel H. L. Harker (Democrat), with 1 678 votes and 20.6 percent. Harker's vote share was unusually high for a third-party candidate in 1935.<sup>263</sup> In 1938, Hultquist would hold the electorate in a two-cornered contest but with his margin cut to 169 votes.

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<sup>259</sup> *Census*, 1936.

<sup>260</sup> Non-Maori population. This was partly due to the inception of forestry schemes: Ministry of Works, *Survey of New Zealand Population*, p. 106.

<sup>261</sup> The database, however, is derived from 64 polling places. Opotoki, The Courthouse; and Opotoki, The Parish Hall; become 'Opotoki'. Waimata, Mangara Station; and Waimata, Rimuroa Station; become 'Waimata'. Whakatane, Borough Council Chambers; and Whakatane, County Council Chambers; become 'Whakatane'. These three aggregations were made because rural electoral rolls provide insufficient information to reliably choose the closer polling place to a given elector. In addition, 15 polling places had no roll entries: Arakihi (20 votes), Arowhanga (26), Koranga (22), Koranga Valley (75), Mangatu (20), Mihiwhetu (48), Moanui (7), Okitu (27), Onetohunga (24), Owetea (47), Parehaka (13), Puhikoko (26), Tuarua (11), Tuhoa (18), Waima (89), a total of 473 votes or 5.8 percent of the electorate total.

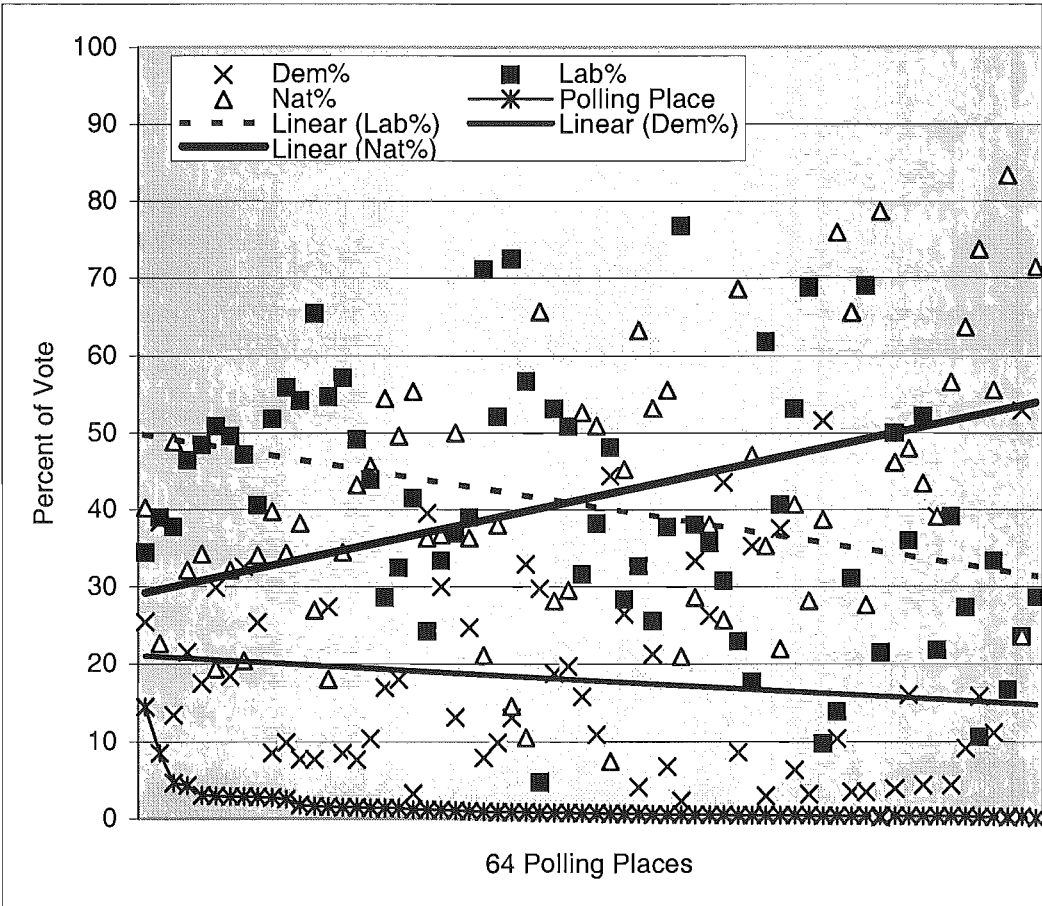
<sup>262</sup> This makes a comparison of 1931 and 1935 data out of the question.

<sup>263</sup> Harker had been prominent in the New Zealand Legion, a right-wing protest party formed in 1933 but defunct by 1935.

*Voting profile*

Figure 10–1 plots 64 database polling places by percentages of the three parties’ votes and by descending percentage of electorate votes. In the main, the voting pattern resembles other rural electorates in

**Figure 10–1: Polling Places by Decreasing Percentage of Electorate Vote and by Percentage of Three Parties’ Votes, Bay of Plenty Electorate 1935 (N = 64)**



this study. Although Labour lost the largest polling place (Opotiki), and the third largest (Tolaga Bay), the next polling place by decreasing size won by Nationalists was the 17th largest (Makauri). Aggregate votes in the 17 polling places were 2 174 for Labour and 1 670 for Nationalists. This margin of 504 was close to Labour’s overall electorate margin of 555 votes, showing how important the larger, more urban polling places were to Labour. Of the remaining 47 polling places, Nationalists won 28 to Labour’s 19, taking 70 more votes than Labour in the process. Democrats polled most evenly of the three parties in rural and urban areas, seen in their more gradually sloping trend line. Democrat and Labour trend lines

run in the same direction—a tendency to smaller vote proportions in rural areas—which generally means that their voters were drawn from the same sections.

Principal data are displayed in table 10–1. To identify voting trends, the 64 polling places in the database are ranked and divided into 32 larger polling places with 6 136 votes, and 32 smaller

**Table 10–1: Party Vote at Three Groupings of Polling Places based on Total Vote Numbers, Bay of Plenty Electorate 1935**

Polling Places	<i>Lab.</i>	<i>Nat.</i>	<i>Dem.</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Lab.</i> %	<i>Nat.</i> %	<i>Dem.</i> %	<i>Total</i> %
32 largest	2 659	2 142	1 335	6 136	43.3	34.9	21.8	100.0
32 smallest	383	466	186	1 035	37.0	45.0	18.0	100.0
Opotiki	405	474	299	1 178	34.4	40.2	25.4	100.0
Electorate	3 519	2 964	1 678	8 161	43.1	36.3	20.6	100.0

polling places with 1 035 votes.<sup>264</sup> The disparity in vote totals reflects the large variations in numbers of voters across urban and rural polling places. Four urban concentrations of voters accounted for 31.7 percent of all electorate votes: Opotiki, two polling places with 18.4 percent of the electorate vote; Whakatane, two polling places with 8.4 percent; Tolaga Bay, 4.6 percent; and Patutahi, 4.3 percent. Most individual polling places, however, contributed less than 2.0 percent of electorate votes. The largest 32 polling places gave Labour 2 659 votes, 43.3 percent; the 32 smaller polling places, gave Labour 383 votes, or 37.0 percent. Labour polled proportionately higher in larger, generally more urban, polling places.

### *Occupational Analysis*

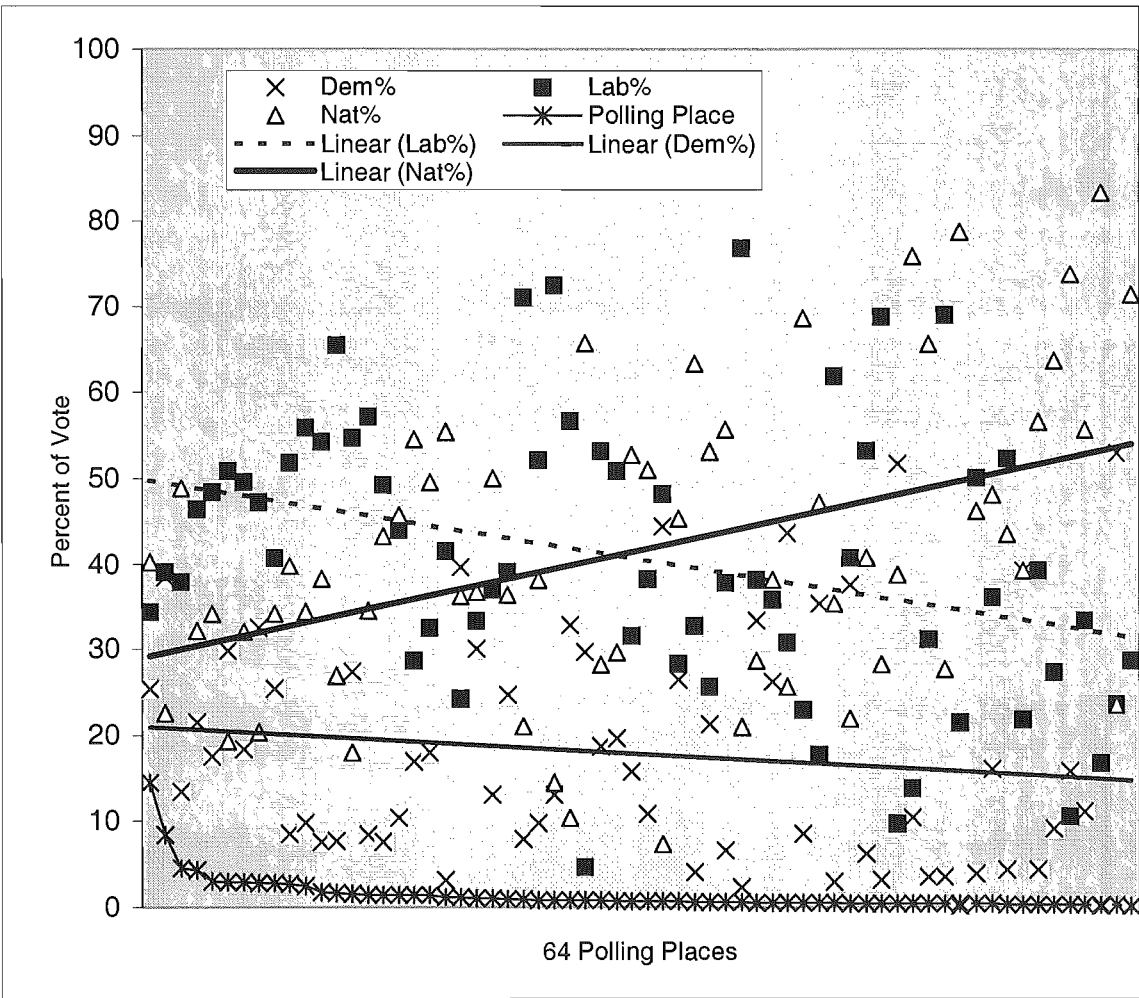
Figure 10–2 plots four male occupational categories in the same order of polling places as the previous plot.<sup>265</sup> Farmer and farm worker percentages increase in parallel with each other as polling places decline in votes. At the same time, manual and white-collar percentages decrease in parallel. Statistical correlations will probably tend to align manuals and white-collars with Labour voting, and farmers and

<sup>264</sup> This division also coincides more or less with the 31 polling places won by Labour.

<sup>265</sup> Data points of polling place vote share have been omitted for clarity.

farm workers with Nationalist voting. The Democrats won fewer votes in rural areas, but did Democrats' better relative performance in urban areas cause Nationalist votes to slip there, or would Labour have polled even higher without Democrat voting?

**Figure 10-2: Polling Places by Percentage of Four Male Occupational Categories, Bay of Plenty Electorate 1935 (N = 64)**



As usual, manual workers dominated urban polling places that cast most of Labour's votes. As Labour votes decreased, farmer percentages tended to increase along with increases in proportions of Nationalist votes. Table 10-2 sets out proportions of each occupational category in the same four groupings as previously. Although white-collar numbers fell sharply outside urban areas, white-collar workers outnumbered farm workers by 182, or 3.6 percentage points across the electorate. Manuals and white-collar workers both outnumbered farmers living in catchments of polling places that had the most votes.



Table 10–2: Polling Places by Percentages in Four Male Occupational Categories, Bay of Plenty Electorate 1935 (N = 64)

Polling Places	<i>Fmr</i>	<i>Farm wrkr.</i>	<i>Man.</i>	<i>Wh-coll.</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Fmr. %</i>	<i>Farm wrkr. %</i>	<i>Man. %</i>	<i>Wh-coll. %</i>	<i>Total</i>
32 largest	1 174	601	1 431	924	4 130	28.4	14.6	34.6	22.4	100.0
32 smallest	342	226	226	87	881	38.8	25.7	25.7	9.9	100.0
Opotoki	155	49	227	225	656	23.6	7.5	34.6	34.3	100.0
Elect.	1 525	831	1 665	1 013	5 034	30.3	16.5	33.1	20.1	100.0

*Correlations between occupations and party votes*

Table 10–3 sets out correlations between party vote percentages and percentages of the four occupational categories. Coefficients are relatively weak compared to most of the test case electorates. Tentative conclusions from the vote and occupational plots earlier suggested a positive association between farmers—as well as farm workers—with Nationalist voting.

Correlations bear this out. Farmers correlate positively with Nationalist voting in all areas. We have already noted that a majority of farmers—the generally more urban-dwelling farmers—was found in the group of largest polling places. Here, farmers correlate more strongly with all three parties (although the differences are small). Overall, farmers show a weak negative correlation (–.16) with Labour, and a slightly weaker negative correlation (–.14) with Democrats.

Like farmers, farm workers in the 32 urban polling places correlate more strongly (.34) with Nationalists than do farm workers in the smaller 32 polling places (.26). Like farmers, they also reject the Democrat candidate (–.27). Overall, farm workers follow farmers in embracing Nationalist voting and rejecting both Labour and Democrat candidates.

**Table 10–3: Correlations between Four Male Occupational Categories and Party Vote Proportions, Bay of Plenty Electorate 1935**

	<i>Polling places</i>	<i>Labour</i>	<i>Nationalist</i>	<i>Democrat</i>
Farmer	32 largest	–.12	.25	–.16
	32 smallest	–.11	.19	–.11
	Electorate	–.16	.25	–.14
Farm worker	32 largest	–.05	.34	–.38
	32 smallest	–.06	.26	–.27
	Electorate	–.15	.35	–.27
Manual	32 largest	.21	–.19	–.03
	32 smallest	.13	–.20	.11
	Electorate	.25	–.30	.08
White-collar	32 largest	–.01	–.45	.60
	32 smallest	.13	–.47	.41
	Electorate	.13	–.49	.47

Manual workers across all polling places correlate positively with Labour (.25). There is a small but noticeably weaker correlation between the more rural manuals and Labour (.13) than between the more urban manuals and Labour (.21). Overall, manuals correlate negatively with Nationalist voting (–.30). The data indicate that manuals in both urban (–.19) and rural areas (–.20) were equally disinclined to vote Nationalist. The overall correlation between manuals and Democrats is very slightly positive (.08), but almost at zero-correlation level. The very small positive correlation between the more rural manuals and Democrat voting (.11) applies only to 226 manuals who comprised just 13.6 percent of all manuals in the

Bay of Plenty electorate. Although manual workers associations with Democrat voting were weak, manuals were a much more likely source of Democrat votes than were farmers or farm workers.

White-collar workers' three negative correlations with Nationalist voting ( $-.45$ ,  $-.47$ , and  $-.49$ ) are all stronger than manuals' negative correlations. The more rural white-collars show a positive correlation of the same strength with Labour ( $.13$ ), but a weaker overall coefficient ( $.13$ ), and a zero-correlation ( $-.01$ ) in the 32 more urban polling places, where 91.2 percent of the electorate's white-collars were situated. White-collars' greatest variation from manuals' correlations are in Democrat voting, with a solid positive association ( $.47$ ) with Democrat voting overall. The vast majority of white-collars—the more urban-dwelling—show the strongest tendency to associate with Democrat voting ( $.60$ ).

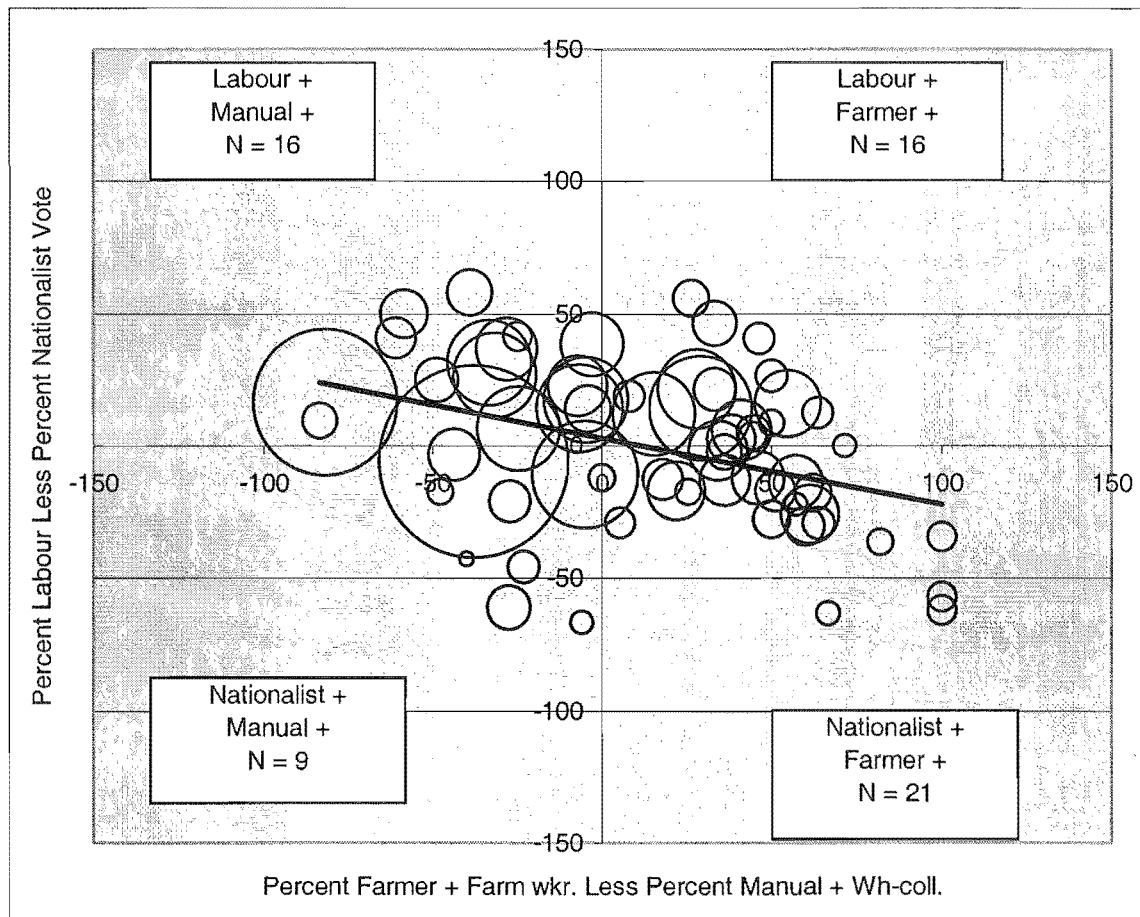
### *Distribution of farmers and manuals; Labour and Nationalist votes*

The bubble chart at figure 10–3 locates each polling place by percentage difference between Labour and Nationalist votes and by percentage difference between manual / white-collar and farmer / farm worker occupational categories. The respective occupational categories are combined because their Nationalist and Labour party correlations move in the same direction. Although conclusions must be tempered by the absence of other data such as the Democrat vote, the plot serves to highlight the relationships between the two dominant parties and the two voting alignments. Text boxes indicate the vote and occupational category predominance in each quadrant, as well as the number of polling places.<sup>266</sup> The shallow downward angle reflects the relative weakness of the correlations.

We first consider the conventional axis of Labour-voting, manual dominated polling places (in the upper left quadrant) compared with Nationalist-voting, farmer-dominated polling places (in the lower right quadrant). The lower right quadrant has 21 polling places with 1 132 votes (Labour, 358;

<sup>266</sup> Text boxes sum to 62 because two polling places have the same vote or occupational percentage and are not included.

Figure 10–3: Polling Places by Percent Labour Less Percent Nationalist Vote, and by Percent Farmer / Farm worker Less Percent Manual / White-collar, Bay of Plenty Electorate 1935 (N = 64)



Nationalists, 587; Democrats, 187). The upper left quadrant has 16 polling places whose vote numbers are visibly higher, totalling 2 647 votes (Labour, 1 286; Nationalists, 679; Democrats, 682). The first feature of these two quadrants is the major party vote: Nationalists take 1 266 votes to Labour's 1 644 votes, a difference of 378 votes in Labour's favour.

The second feature is the origin of Democrat votes: 181 votes in the 21 farmer–farm worker polling places, at an average per polling place of 8.6 votes; against 682 votes in the manual–white-collar polling places, at an average per polling place of 42.6 votes. The third feature of these two quadrants is Democrats' win over the Nationalists across the 16 manual-dominated polling places. The margin of three votes (682 votes to 679) is mainly interesting because Democrats were able to more than match Nationalists in the more populous areas, rather than the less populous ones that the historiography has suggested. More important is the effect on the Labour vote: manuals and white-collar outweighed farmers and farm workers by a ratio of 2.5:1, yet Labour took only twice as many votes as Nationalists, due to Democrats' intervention.

Cross-party voting between Labour and Nationalists is reflected in the bottom left and upper right quadrants. Initially, the 16 farmer-dominated Labour-voting polling places easily seem to outweigh nine manual-dominated Nationalist-voting polling places. In other words, the phenomenon of farmers voting Labour appears to outweigh that of manual workers voting Nationalist. Once again, however, size mattered: the 16 polling places with more farmers than manuals and more Labour than Nationalist votes averaged 94 votes each, comprising altogether 770 votes for Labour and 512 votes for the Nationalists. The net difference was a 258-vote margin to Labour. On the other hand, the nine polling places dominated by manuals and Nationalist votes averaged 205 votes each, comprising altogether 615 votes for Labour and 814 for Nationalists—a net 199-vote margin to Nationalists. On balance, the farmer alignment helped the Labour party by just 59 votes.

### *Minor party voting*

Democrats' 1 678 votes in Bay of Plenty were three times more than Labour's winning margin. So far, evidence from correlations between party vote and occupational profile indicates that manuals and white-collar workers were the chief source of Democrat votes because these two categories positively correlated with Democrat voting. A refinement on the original correlations is found in table 10–4, which sets out partial correlations controlling for Democrat voting. In this case, both manual and white-collar worker coefficients increase after controlling for linear effects of Democrat voting.

**Table 10–4: Polling Place Partial Correlations (Controlling for Democrat Voting) between Four Male Occupational Categories and Labour and Nationalist Voting, Bay of Plenty Electorate 1935 (N = 64)**

	<i>Farmer</i>	<i>Farm worker</i>	<i>Manual</i>	<i>White-collar</i>
Labour	--	--	.29 (.25)	.34 (.13)
Nationalist	.22 (.25)	.26 (.35)	--	--
difference	–.03	–.09	.04	.21

Note: coefficients in parentheses are the original, zero-order coefficients from table 10–3.

This suggests that manuals and white-collars were a source of Democrat voting. Conversely, both farmer and farm worker partial correlations with Nationalist voting are weaker than the originals, indicating that

the effects of Democrat voting made the original correlations look a little stronger: the ‘true’ correlation is slightly weaker. In terms of the relative strength of the differences, white-collars easily outweigh the three other categories, confirming the stronger link between white-collars and Democrat voting.

### *Population changes*

Table 10–5 shows changes in occupational relativity when deletions and additions updated the electoral roll. Farmers, farm workers and white-collars all slip in relativity to manual workers: four times more manuals than farmers were added to the roll, three times more manuals than white-collars, and twice as many manuals as farm workers. Manuals displace farmers as the largest

**Table 10–5: Occupational Profiles of General Section, Supplementary Section, and Total Electoral Roll, Bay of Plenty Electorate 1935**

Roll section	<i>Farmer</i>	<i>Farm worker</i>	<i>Manual</i>	<i>White-collar</i>	<i>Total</i>
General N	1 418	589	1 233	861	4 101
General %	34.6	14.4	30.1	21.0	100.1
Supp. N	107	242	432	152	933
Supp. %	11.5	25.9	46.3	16.3	100.0
Total N	1 525	831	1 665	1 013	5 034
Total %	30.3	16.5	33.1	20.1	100.0

category. These changes occurred during the depression, confirming Malone’s suspicion—noted in chapter 2—that numbers of manual workers and farm workers increased disproportionately in rural electorates. Because manuals and white-collars largely preferred to vote Labour, the effect of their aggregate 584 new voters easily outweighed the aggregate 349 new farmers and farm workers, who largely preferred to vote Nationalist.

### ***Research hypotheses***

*Hypothesis 1: the majority of farmers voted Labour (strong version); alternatively, Labour won because sufficient farmers combined with other voters (weak version).*

There were insufficient farmers to have been divided in the way determined by the strong version. Had at least half the farmers—in reality, 15 percent of male electors—voted Labour, we would be contemplating an actual Nationalist vote of 37 percent, but derived from a voter alignment of 31.5 percent of male electors. There is, however, evidence for cross-party voting by both manuals and farmers, but the balance that favoured the Labour party was too small to have bridged the gap between Nationalists and Labour, compromising the weak version of the claim. Labour had sufficient aligned voters to win the election on its own account.

*Hypothesis 2: farm workers voted Labour.*

Positive correlations show that higher percentages of farm workers associate positively with higher percentages of Nationalist, not Labour, voting.

*Hypothesis 3: white-collar workers voted Labour.*

This hypothesis is supported by Bay of Plenty data, although the positive association is very weak, pulled down by a moderately strong positive correlation with Democrat voting.

*Hypothesis 4: minor parties took votes disproportionately from the Nationalists.*

Analysis of Democrat and cross-party voting suggests that Labour suffered more than Nationalists. Manuals positive association with Labour (.25) was the same as that of farmers with Nationalist voting, but Labour's white-collars were a weaker link than were Nationalists' farm workers.

*Hypothesis 5: changes in rural electorates' occupational profiles during the depression favoured the Labour party.*

This hypothesis is supported by changes in the occupational profile of the electorate during the depression when manuals overtook farmers as the largest occupational category.

*Hypothesis 6: increased voter turnout benefited Labour in 1935.*

This hypothesis is not tested by Bay of Plenty data because no election took place there in 1931.

### ***Conclusion***

Labour's 1935 winning margin of 6.8 percentage points was a significant achievement in an area that had previously strongly supported conservative governments. The Bay of Plenty electorate experienced disproportionate growth in the ranks of those who tended to associated with Labour voting, lending weight to Malone's assertion that rural electorates in the depression saw strong growth in numbers of

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manual workers. Roll changes appear to have been decisive, but in any case they also offset a Democrat-voting tendency by Labour-aligned sections. The election results in the Bay of Plenty electorate do not fit the orthodox interpretation of the 1935 election. In particular, the data analysis establishes that farmers were a minority of male electors, that farmers generally aligned with Nationalists, and that few Democrat votes could have come from them.



## Chapter 11: The Thames Electorate 1935

### *Introduction*

The Thames electorate principally encompassed the Coromandel peninsula on the north east coast of the North Island, and extended out to sea to include some offshore islands; in particular, Mercury Island and Cuvier Island. Voters concentrated in certain areas of the electorate, as expected in a rural electorate with a population that had a relatively high urban component. The Representation Commission classified the population of this dairying electorate as 54 percent rural, the lowest rating of the 10 'rural' cases in this study. Thames was one of six rural electorates termed 'special country' by Chapman, in order to highlight the presence of miners, timber workers, and railwaymen.

Thames had been a Labour-conservative contest in 1931. The winner on that occasion, the Coalition's A. M. Samuel won a two-cornered contest by 5.2 percentage points over Labour's J. S. Montgomerie. In 1935, Samuel, this time standing as an Independent, lost to a new Labour candidate, J. Thorn, by 11.6 percentage points. Thorn's margin of 1 262 votes is the third highest in this study. The minor party vote, on the other hand, was a meagre 2.2 percent; P. Keegan, a Democrat, had the lowest third-party vote in this study. Keegan's highest vote at any polling place was 12 percent.<sup>267</sup> Democrat votes are excluded from most of the analysis—in 1935, the contest was effectively two-cornered again.

### *Voting analysis*

Polling places listed in the election results range from Waihi Courthouse with 1 633 votes, to Opoutere with six votes. Thames had 51 listed polling places in the election results, but analysis necessarily excludes Waiaro, with 17 votes, because it had no corresponding electoral roll entries. Seven other individual polling places are aggregated because of uncertainty as to voters' likely polling place preference, leaving a database of 46 polling places.

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<sup>267</sup> The median third-party vote in these 10 electorates was 12.5 percent.

Labour won 29 of the total 51 polling places—56.9 percent—listed in the election results.<sup>268</sup> Labour won 25 of the database polling places, the Independent won 21, and one was a tie.

As noted in the introduction, voters were concentrated in a few large polling places. Three areas in particular, Waihi, Thames, and Paeroa, contributed 48.6 percent of the vote. Polling places won by Labour tended to be much larger, totalling 8 385 votes for an average 335 votes per polling place. Those won by the Independent candidate totalled 1 836 votes, for an average of 87 votes. Put another way, Labour's median polling place cast 53 votes; the Independent's cast 31 votes.

Votes cast at the largest eight polling places constituted 66.4 percent of the electorate total. Labour's electorate margin was 1 262 votes, and the result of the largest eight polling places (with a total of 7 249 votes) was 4 203 votes to Labour and 2 902 votes to the Independent. Labour took more than its winning electorate margin at these eight polling places—of which the Independent won only one—and Labour went on to almost hold its own across the rest of the electorate.

In the 39 remaining polling places, with a total of 3 067 votes, the Independent narrowly prevailed with 1 536 votes to Labour's 1 458 votes. Labour's lead, established in the largest polling places, was a more than adequate buffer against the Independent's rally in the smaller polling places. Figure 11–1 illustrates the relationship between Labour and Independent votes in the top eight polling places. The importance of Waihi—the largest polling place with 19.9 percent of the total electorate vote—is obvious, because the Labour candidate did not comprehensively outvote the Independent in the remainder of the group of eight.

Figure 11–2 sets out voting data for all 46 polling places in the database. Labour's falling trend line indicates the party's decreasing proportion of the vote as the polling places become smaller and generally more rural. The Komata polling place is highly visible for its high-percentage Labour vote against the trend of Labour voting in rural areas. Komata had four miners as well as five manuals, no white-collars, six farmers and one farm worker; 22 votes were cast, with 19 for Labour and three for the Independent. In this case, it appears that some farmers voted Labour.

Independent voting percentages increase as the vote share of polling places falls. The differential between Labour and Independent trend lines to the right of the plot suggests a large differential in votes: at the smaller 24 polling places (about half the total number), the average Independent vote was 56 percent against the average Labour vote of 42 percent. Table 11–1 sets out voting data referred to above.

<sup>268</sup> Thames, Courthouse (807 votes) and Thames, Druids' Hall (964 votes) were aggregated under 'Thames' (1 771 votes); Waihi, East End School (300 votes), Waihi, South End School (238 votes) and Waihi, Courthouse (1 633 votes) were aggregated under 'Waihi' (2 171 votes); and Whangamata, Public School (32 votes) and Whangamata, Wharekawa Hall (36 votes) were aggregated under 'Whangamata' (68 votes).

Figure 11-1: Polling Places by Decreasing Percentage of Electorate Vote and by Percentage of Party Vote, Thames Electorate 1935 (N = 46)

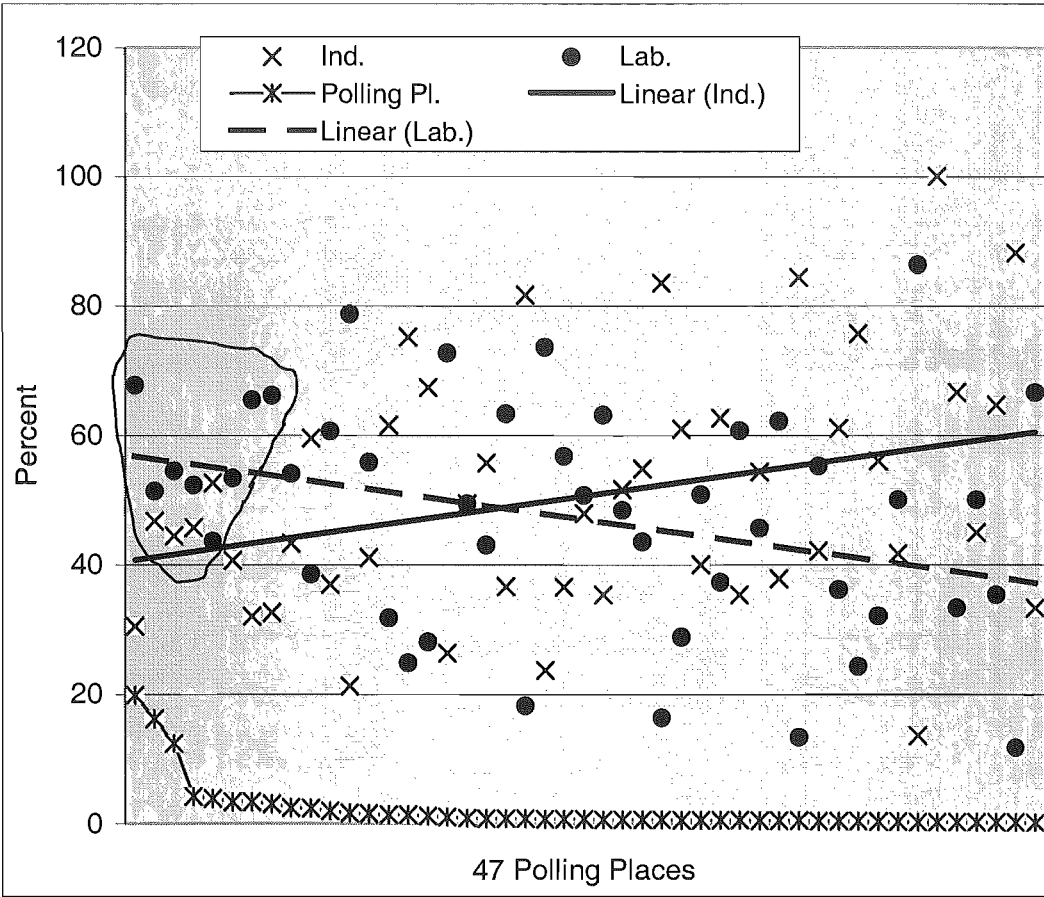
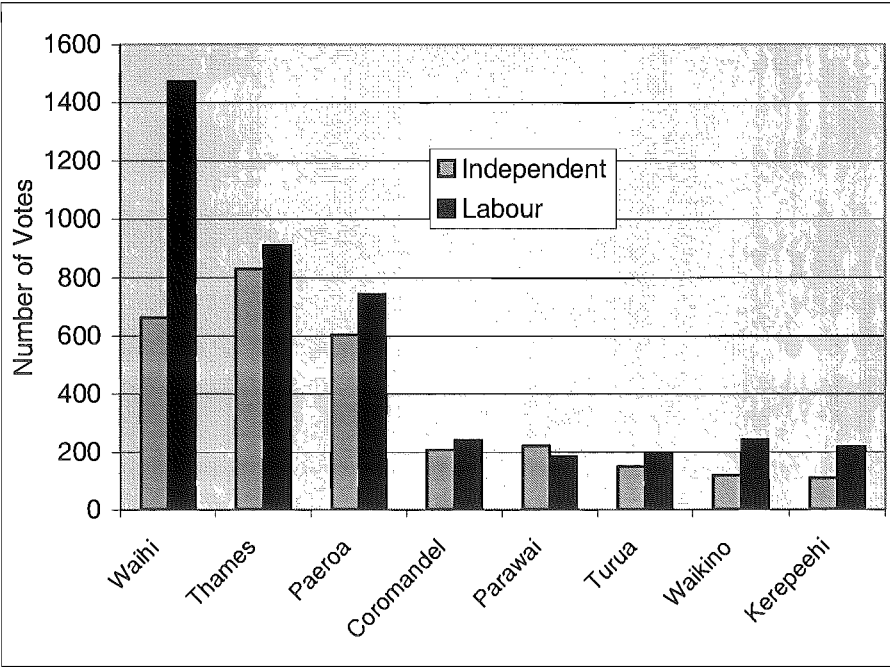


Figure 11-2: Eight Largest Polling Places By Party Vote, Thames Electorate 1935



**Table 11–1: Labour and Independent Vote, Thames Electorate 1935**

Polling Places	<i>Labour</i>	<i>Indep.</i>	<i>3-party total</i>	<i>Labour margin</i>	<i>Labour %</i>	<i>Indep. %</i>
8 Largest*	4 203	2 902	7 249	1 301	58.0	40.0
38 Smallest	1 428	1 536	3 067	–108	46.6	50.1
Waihi	1 472	663	2 171	806	67.8	30.6
Electorate	5 631	4 707	10 912	1 262	54.7	43.1

Note: 1. The Democrat share of the top eight polling places was 2.0 percent, and of the 38 smaller polling places, 2.4 percent.

2.\* group includes the town of Waihi.

3. Electorate total includes the group of polling places excluded earlier.

### ***Occupational profile***

Figure 11–3 demonstrates the distribution of occupational proportions across all 46 polling places.

Proportions of farmers tend to increase in smaller polling places. Farmers' trend line is the steepest of the four categories, indicating that the differential between the larger polling places to the left of the plot, and the smaller ones to the right, is widest for farmers. At the same time, farm workers' trend line also rises, but barely perceptibly. Manuals' trend line indicates that polling place percentages of manuals decrease outside the larger, urban, polling places. White-collars' trend line shows that the reduction in their proportions in the more rural areas is almost, but not quite, as sharp as that of manuals.

**Figure 11–3: Polling Places by Percentages of Four Male Occupational Categories, and by Share of Electorate Vote, Thames Electorate 1935 (N = 46)**

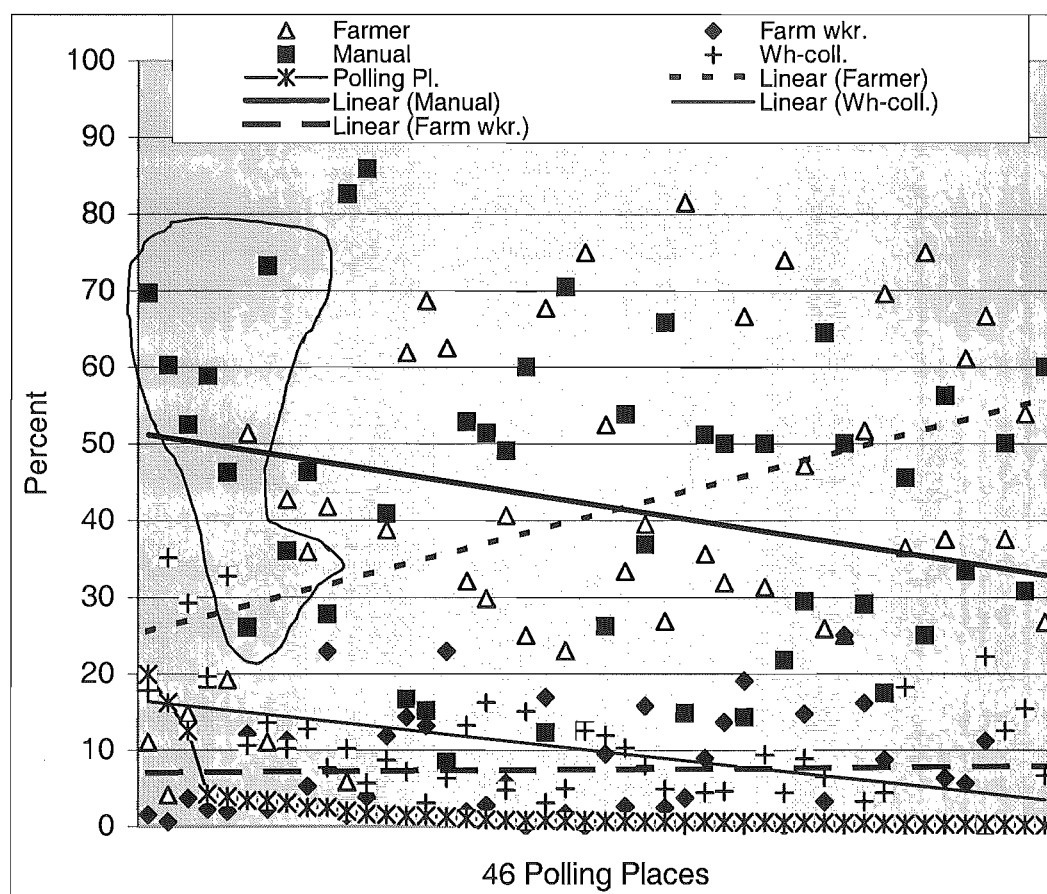


Table 11–2 sets out occupational data in a similar manner to the voting data in figure 11–1.

**Table 11–2: Composition of Four Male Occupational Categories, Thames Electorate 1935**

Polling Places	Farmers	Farm workers	Manuels	White-collars	Farmer %	Farm worker %	Manual %	White-collar %	Total
8 Largest*	620	122	2 544	1 042	14.3	2.8	58.7	24.1	99.9
38 Smallest	725	163	736	131	41.3	9.3	41.9	7.5	100.0
Waihi	138	19	878	224	11.0	1.5	69.7	17.8	100.0
Electorate	1 345	285	3 280	1 173	22.1	4.7	53.9	19.3	100.0

Note: \* group includes Waihi.

Remembering that eight areas with most votes contributed 66.4 percent of the electorate's total, we see that in these areas farmers constituted 14.3 percent of male electors; farm workers, 2.8 percent; manuals, 58.7 percent; and white-collars, 24.1 percent. At these same eight polling places, Labour took 58.0 percent to the Independent's 40.0 percent, implying a significant degree of conservative voting by manuals and / or white-collars.

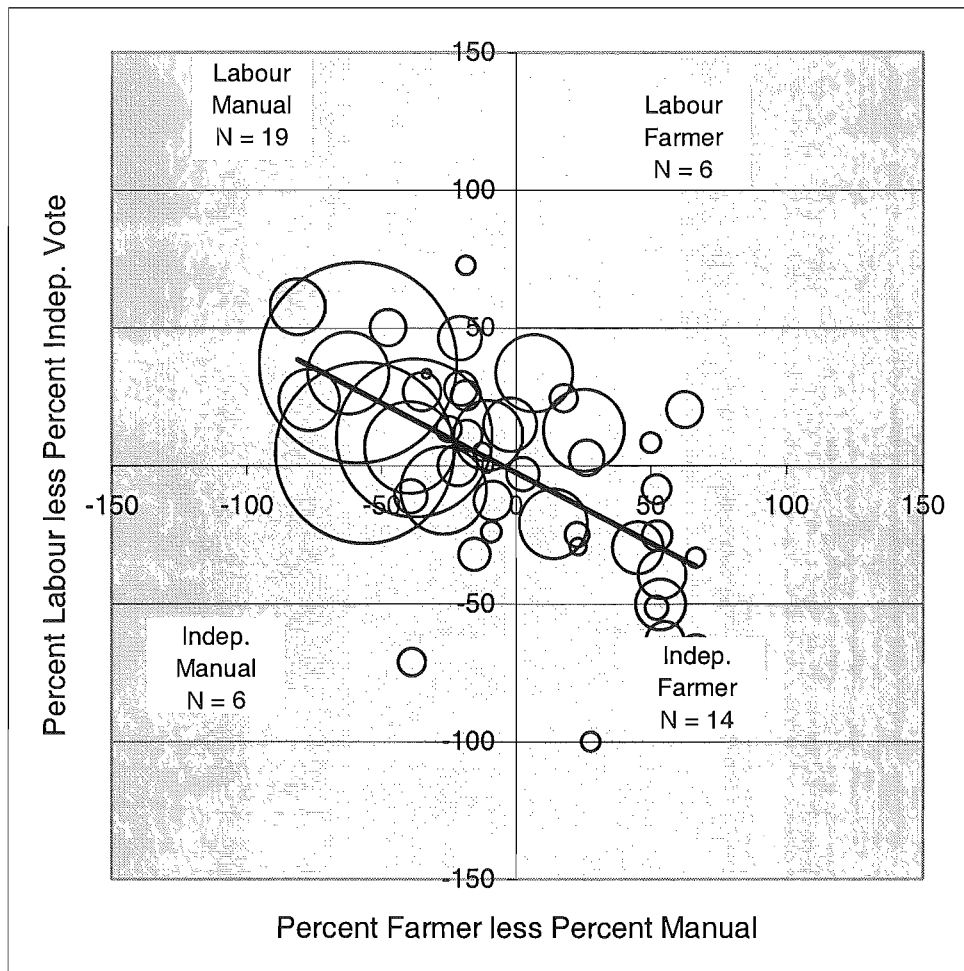
Manuals outnumbered farmers in this electorate even without the inclusion of Chapman's miners, upon whom he appears to have based his claim that Thames was a 'special country' electorate. Miners comprised 12.6 percent of electorate males, and 23.4 percent of manuals. Without miners, manuals in Thames still comprised 41.3 percent of male electors and were more than double the number of farmers. Waihi alone contained 441 miners, 57.5 percent of the electorate total of 767. The largest eight polling places (including Waihi) contributed 642 miners, 83.7 percent of the electorate total.

The Labour and Independent candidates dominated voting; manuals and farmers dominated the male occupational categories; although white-collars were only 2.8 percentage points behind farmers. Figure 11-4 plots these data in a bubble chart. The trend line slope indicates that the data is linear, and that Labour voting is negatively associated with higher proportions of farmers. This is contrary to what we expected to see, based on the historiographical claim that farmers generally voted Labour. Instead, higher proportions of farmers are associated with higher proportions of Independent voting.

As expected in this electorate with high proportions of manuals and Labour voting, 19 polling places featured more manuals than farmers, and more Labour than Independent votes; compared with 14 polling places that featured farmers and Independent votes. Six polling places had more manuals than farmers, but cast more votes for the Independent candidate than for they did for Labour. Conversely, the same number of polling places had more farmers than manuals but voted predominantly for the Labour party. In fact, as may be inferred from the bubble sizes, the six polling places identified as 'Labour, Farmer' contributed 8.4 percent of electorate votes; while the six identified as 'Independent, Manual' contributed 6.4 percent of electorate votes.

Cross-party voting occurred both ways but involved farmers to a greater extent than manuals. Two percentage points of the electorate vote, however, is absorbed by Labour's 11.6 percent electorate margin. That some farmers voted Labour was not a factor in Labour's win in Thames.

**Figure 11-4: Polling Places by Percent Farmer Less Percent Manual, and by Percent Labour Less Percent Independent Vote, Thames Electorate 1935 (N = 46)**



Note: The text boxes total 45 because Kopu, with the same number of votes for both parties, although plotted on the chart, is not included in the tallies.

White-collar and farm worker data are absent from the bubble chart, and as noted, white-collars were almost as numerous as farmers in Thames. Accordingly, party voting is correlated with all four occupational categories to confirm the above findings and to factor in additional data, and coefficients are displayed in Table 11-3.

**Table 11–3: Polling Place Correlations between Proportions of Four Male Occupational Categories and Party Vote Proportions, Thames Electorate 1935 (N = 46)**

	<i>Farmer</i>	<i>Farm worker</i>	<i>Manual</i>	<i>White-collar</i>
Labour	–.56	–.24	.56	.19
Independent	.55	.25	–.56	–.20
Democrat	.01	–.04	–.01	.04

Note: The proportions of Democrat voting were miniscule, and the candidate won no votes at 17 polling places: these factors compromise Democrat correlations.

Correlations confirm the positive associations between farmers and Independent voting, and between manuals and Labour voting. White-collars aligned with manuals; farm workers aligned with farmers. White-collars' correlations are relatively weak compared with manuals', and suggest that white-collars were less inclined to vote systematically for Labour. White-collars, then, were more likely to vote for the Independent than were manuals. Of the 10 cases, Thames proves to have the third-highest negative correlation between farmers and Labour voting.

### *Minor-party voting*

As noted, Thames had the lowest third-party vote of the 10 cases in this study, too low to draw meaningful conclusions from the data. This may reflect the profiles of the Labour party and Independent candidate, who had both contested the previous election. In any event, Thames data do not provide a reliable test of the historiographical claim that minor parties ate into the conservative vote. The most that can be said is that correlations between Democrat vote proportions and voting for the Labour and for the Independent candidate reveals small negative coefficients—as Democrat votes rise, naturally votes for other parties will fall.

The question then arises: which party's voting tends to run more counter to that of Democrats? Or, put another way, as the Democrat vote rises, which party's vote falls more? The correlation between Democrat and Independent voting is  $-.085$ , and that between Democrat and Labour voting is  $-.08$ : a very small probability can be inferred that conservative (Independent) voting was more affected than Labour voting, but the difference between the two parties is vanishingly small.



### *Population changes*

Static between 1928 and 1931, the electoral roll jumped by 10 percent between 1931 and 1935. The combined effect of both increases would see numbers of votes rise from 8 940 in 1931, to 10 912 in 1935, an increase of 22.1 percent. The first of two measures of change was to analyse the supplementary electoral roll for voters added since the previous election. Table 11–4 shows that manuals formed the bulk of new voters. Manuals were already the principal occupational category in Thames, but additions to the roll during the depression further consolidated their position.

Manuals comprised 59.5 percent of the additions to the roll, more than three times higher than farmers with 16.9 percent, who were closely followed by white-collars on 14.8 percent of additions to the roll. Farm workers, although showing a 57.5 percent increase in the size of their category, only comprised 8.8 percent of new male registrations. The combination of manuals and white-collars—the two Labour-aligned categories—contributed 881 (74.3 percent) of additions to the roll.<sup>269</sup> Miners comprised 38.7 percent of additional manuals.

**Table 11–4: Changes in Four Male Occupational Categories, Thames Electorate 1931–1935.**

	<i>Farmer</i>	<i>Farm worker</i>	<i>Manual</i>	<i>White-collar</i>	<i>Total</i>
General Roll	1 144	181	2 574	1 001	4 900
Supp. Roll	201	104	706	175	1 186
Total Roll	1 345	285	3 280	1 176	6 086
Percent Increase	17.6	57.5	27.4	17.5	N/A
Percent Share of Additions	16.9	8.8	59.5	14.8	100.0

The second measure of change is the list of deletions from the general roll—those who had died or left the electorate. Again, manuals and white-collars predominate: manuals comprised 48.6 percent of males deleted from the roll; white-collars comprised 23.6 percent; farmer and farm worker categories each comprised 13.9 percent; and miners comprised 25.7 percent of manuals removed from the roll.

<sup>269</sup> Note that miners increased by 35 percent and other manuals by 25.4 percent.

### ***Turnout***

A comparison of the 1931 and 1935 election results reveals that there were only three new polling places in 1935. Of the remainder, seven polling places showed a reduction in vote numbers in 1935, against 37 polling places with more votes than in 1931. Independent-won polling places had an average 21 more votes in 1935, but Labour-won polling places took an average 60 more votes in 1935.

### ***Research hypotheses***

*Hypothesis 1: the majority of farmers voted Labour (strong version); or, Labour won because sufficient farmers combined with other voters (weak version).*

As in all other Labour-won electorates in this study, there was no systematic association between farmers and Labour voting. Areas with the highest proportions of farmers—the rural hinterland—tend to have the lowest proportions of Labour votes. Farmers played no role in Labour's success in Thames.

*Hypothesis 2: farm workers voted Labour.*

This claim is not supported by Thames' data. Like farmers, farm workers show a systematic association with the conservative candidate, not with Labour.

*Hypothesis 3: white-collar workers voted Labour.*

Thames' data confirm this hypothesis. White-collars correlate positively with Labour voting; and although the coefficient is weak, it lies on the median of the 10 cases.

*Hypothesis 4: minor parties took votes disproportionately from the Nationalists.*

With no Nationalist candidate in this electorate, we substituted 'conservative Independent' candidate. So few third-party votes were cast that no reliable voting trends can be discerned. On meagre evidence, however, it appears that the Democrat probably took a few more votes off the conservatives than off Labour.

*Hypothesis 5: changes in rural electorates' occupational profiles during the depression favoured the Labour party.*

Electoral roll data confirm that many more of the Labour-aligned manuals and white-collars were added to the electoral roll between 1931 and 1935. In the case of some other rural electorates in this study, changes during the depression shifted the occupational profile so that it came to favour the Labour party. Not so in Thames; which already had a substantial component of manuals—bolstered by miners—and white-collar workers. Changes during the depression merely slightly strengthened the Labour-voting alignment. Of course, a sizeable contingent of manual workers in Thames in 1931 raises the question of Labour's 47.4 percent vote in that election. It seems that at that time a good many manual worker votes must have gone to the conservatives.

*Hypothesis 6: higher voter turnout benefited Labour in 1935*

The data are not conclusive, but Labour-voting polling places showed larger increases in votes in 1935 than did the opposition's polling places.

**Conclusion**

Thames' electorate analysis has proven consistent with that of other rural electorates in this study. Labour won because of the allegiance of its traditional supporters, manuals, supported by white-collar workers. Although a few farmers voted Labour, farmers systematically correlated with voting for the conservative candidate. In any case, the question of farmers voting Labour is undermined by its corollary: a number of voters usually considered traditional Labour supporters voted conservative.

Thames shows an electoral swing of 17 percent between 1931 and 1935. The same conservative Independent candidate fought both contests. The Democrat vote was inconclusive and not able to alter the essential two-party nature of the contest. The occupational profile was quite stable, in the sense that the relativity between categories did not change by more than a few percentage points. Turnout increased by a significant 8.8 percentage points in 1935—this was somewhat less than other comparable cases but did no more than restore Thames to its former relativity.

The 1935 result was not a matter of farmers changing allegiance—certainly, there is no indication of a voting alignment of farmers, farm workers, and manual workers.. Samuel, the Independent candidate, took a similar number of votes in 1935 as he did in 1931. The Labour vote, on the other hand, increased by 1 731. Data from the general roll suggest that farmers and farm workers together constituted perhaps 27 percent of males in 1931. If that is even remotely the case, then manual workers can be presumed to have voted conservative in 1931 in substantial numbers. Above all, manual workers turning to the Labour party for the first time generated Labour's dramatic electoral performance in Thames in 1935.

## Chapter 12: The Waimarino Electorate 1935

### *Introduction*

Located in the central North Island, Waimarino was one of the larger rural electorates in 1935, featuring the mountains of Tongariro, Ngauruhoe, and Ruapehu, and the urban centre of Taumaranui. Waimarino consisted of parts of the King Country, the Bay of Plenty, and the Wanganui area, as well as parts of Taupo, but did not include the lake itself. Over the intercensal period from 1926 to 1936, the electorate experienced significant outward migration; Waimarino county, for example, lost 25.6 percent of its population due to the decline of sawmilling.<sup>270</sup> Waimarino electorate is the sole instance in this study where a reduction in registered electors occurred between 1931 and 1935.

The 1935 election result in Waimarino had several outstanding features: the incumbency of Frank Langstone, making Waimarino the only one of the 10 case studies with an incumbent Labour MP;<sup>271</sup> it was one of Chapman's six 'special country' electorates; and Labour won a comfortable outright majority in Waimarino, whereas the party took a number of other rural electorates by the barest of margins. In addition, Waimarino's status as a rural electorate was controversial: Tony Simpson doubted that it was a 'rural seat proper'.<sup>272</sup> Finally, Waimarino had a higher proportion of male electors (58.4 percent) than did other electorates in this study; and they appear to have been more politicised—judging by an exemplary voter turnout of 93.4 percent—than were males in other rural constituencies.<sup>273</sup>

### *Voting analysis*

The Labour party won 60 of 91 polling places—the party's highest proportion in 10 rural electorates—by a margin of 1 863 votes. Langstone—a settler from Ohakune Junction—won with 60.1 percent of the valid vote from C. A. Boles (Nationalist)—a grocer from Taumaranui—with 37.4 percent.

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<sup>270</sup> Ministry of Works, *Survey of New Zealand Population*, p. 137.

<sup>271</sup> In 1931, Langstone defeated W. H. Wackrow (Coalition) by 591 votes: 4 174 votes (53.8 percent) to 3 583 (46.2 percent).

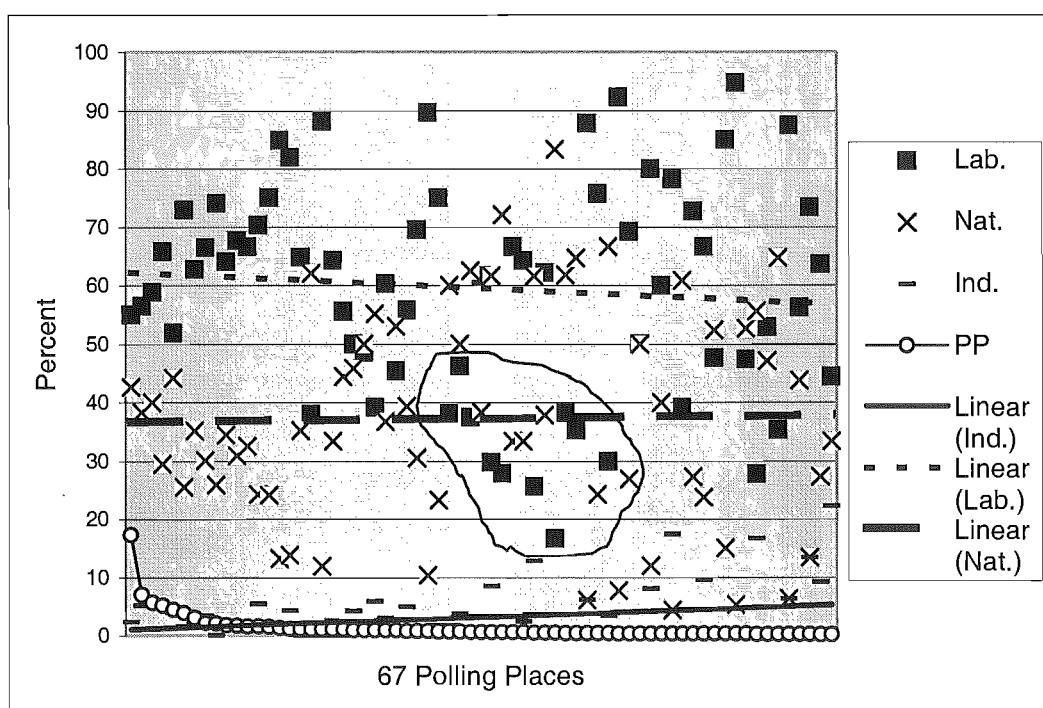
<sup>272</sup> Simpson, 'Huey Long's Other Island', p. 157.

<sup>273</sup> Waimarino had one of the highest turnout rates of all electorates; the national mean was 90.75 percent in 1935.

H. W. B. Littlewood (Independent)—a farmer from Raetihi—came third with 2.5 percent. The Labour vote increased by 6.3 percentage points over the party's 1931 result, whereas the Nationalist vote fell 8.8 percentage points.

The electorate had fewer urban centres than did other electorates in this study, although seven polling places each contributed three percent or more of electorate votes.<sup>274</sup> The largest of these was Taumaranui, with 17.3 percent of the electorate vote (1 427 votes). All seven—with an aggregate vote of 49.6 percent—voted Labour. The database excludes 18 of 90 listed polling places because there are no corresponding entries on the electoral roll,<sup>275</sup> and eleven polling places were aggregated to five, because of insufficient information to reliably determine a voter's closest polling place.<sup>276</sup> Figure 12–1 plots each of 67 database

**Figure 12–1: Polling Places by Decreasing Percentage of Electorate Vote and by Percentages of Party Vote, Waimarino Electorate 1935 (N = 67)**



<sup>274</sup> The data exclude the 'Absent, declaration, postal and seamen's vote' category (527 votes).

<sup>275</sup> Field's Track (42 votes), Kawautahi (39), Kokomiko (62), Makotuku (33), Mangakahu (12), Mangakahu Road (23), Manganui (14), Mangapurua Road (14), Maungaroa Road (40), Maungatepopo (91), Middle Road (29), Piriaka (80), Rangi, North Otunui. (26), Taringamotu West (26), Tuna Saddle (25), Turoto (14), Waimarino–Retaruke Road (18), and Whenuakura (22).

<sup>276</sup> The five aggregations are: Retaruke (42 votes), from Upper Retaruke and Lower Retaruke; Waimihia (120 votes), from Boon's Mill Office and Endean's Mill Office; Ongarue (128 votes), from Ellis and Burnand's Mill, No. 9 Camp, and Ellis and Burnand's Cabin; Ohura (362 votes), from Ohura, Ohura Road and Upper Ohura Road; Erua (106 votes), from Hayward's Mill Office and Railway Goods-shed.

polling places by percentages of the three parties' votes, and by percentage of electorate votes.

Waimarino modifies the data pattern evident in other cases: percentages of Labour votes fall away only slightly across the electorate, reflecting the fact that the party won two-thirds of all polling places. In the centre of the plot are 10 polling places with the lowest Labour percentages (an average 32.6 percent to Nationalists' 64.4 percent),<sup>277</sup> which have been marked out for further analysis. Labour vote proportions recover in the smallest polling places to the right of the plot, helping to offset losses in the medium-sized polling places.

The Nationalist vote trend line indicates a barely perceptible rise across the spectrum of polling places. This is unusual: generally Nationalist votes rise more dramatically as polling places become smaller. A group of data points in the middle of the plot show where Nationalists took a larger share of the vote: these polling places had the strongest representation of farmers and the weakest representation of manuals in the electorate. Nationalists gained most votes where farmers were most numerous.

A finer-grained view ranks polling places according to electorate vote share and divides them into two groups set out in table 12–1: 33 larger and 33 smaller polling places.

**Table 12–1: Party Vote in Four Configurations of Polling Places, Waimarino Electorate 1935**

Polling Places	Labour	Nat.	Indep.	Total	Lab. %	Nat. %	Indep. %	Total %
33 Largest*	3 763	2 264	157	6 184	60.9	36.6	2.6	100.1
33 Smallest	474	360	31	865	54.8	41.6	3.6	100.0
Taumaranui	785	609	33	1 427	55.0	42.7	2.3	100.0
Electorate	4 945	3 082	206	8 233	60.1	37.4	2.5	100.0

\* includes Taumaranui.

The 33 larger polling places cast 6 184 votes: 3 763 for Labour (60.9 percent); 2 264 for the Nationalists (36.6 percent); and 157 for the Independent (2.5 percent). Twenty-six of 33 large polling places went to Labour. Conversely, 33 small polling places cast 865 votes: 474 for Labour (54.8 percent); 360 votes for

<sup>277</sup> Two of the 10 were areas where the Independent polled well above his electorate share, apparently at Labour's cost: Kirikau (Labour, 25.6 percent of the vote; Nationalists, 61.5 percent; and Independent, 12.8 percent); and Tuhua (Labour, 29.8 percent; Nationalists, 61.7 percent; and Independent, 8.5 percent).

Nationalists (41.6 percent); and 31 votes for the Independent (3.6 percent). Twenty of 33 small polling places went to Labour. These data confirm three things: firstly, that Labour polled relatively better across Waimarino as a whole than in any of the other cases in this study. Secondly, that Labour's performance in the rural hinterland was still weaker than its performance in the larger, generally more urban, areas. And thirdly, that both Nationalist and Independent candidates were stronger in rural areas. The last point suggests that Labour lost more than did Nationalists through third-party voting.

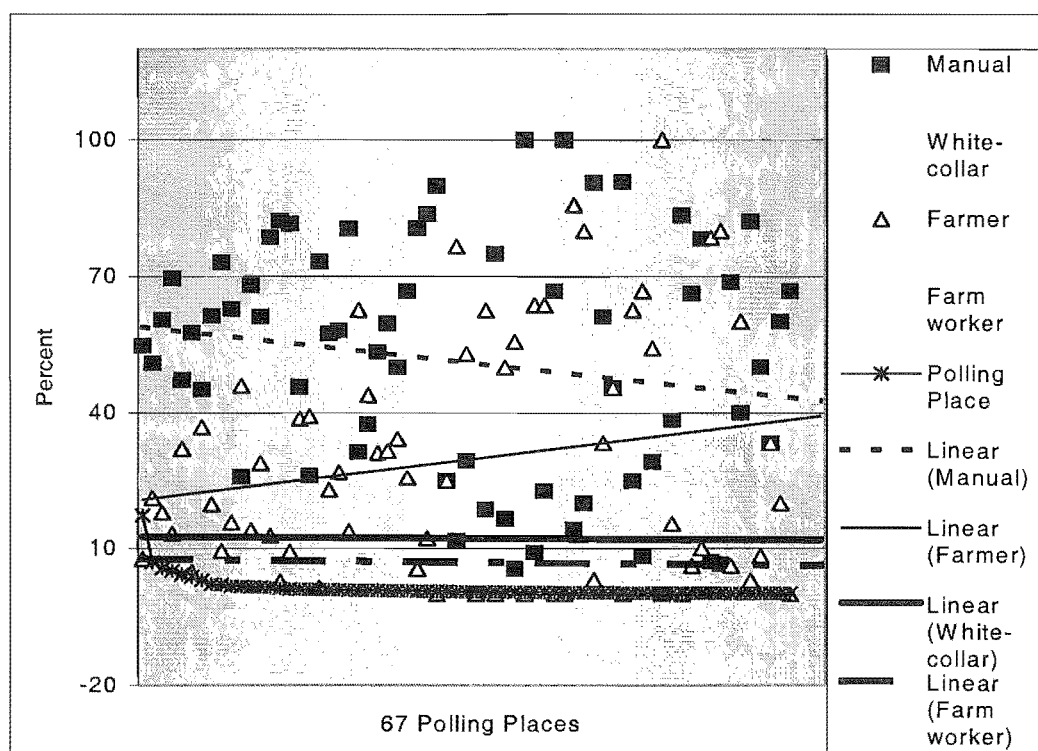
### *Occupational profile*

The 1935 electoral roll features 2 919 manual workers: 2 447 general blue-collar workers; 180 railway workers; 25 miners; and 267 timber workers. Because Waimarino's 'special country' status featured timber workers and railwaymen, one expected to see those occupations more heavily represented on the electoral roll. Manual workers comprised 56.7 percent of male electors, farmers 20.2 percent, white-collar workers 17.4 percent, and farm workers just 5.7 percent. Farmers, farm workers, and white-collars all fell below the mean proportions of the 10 test cases; whereas manuals were nearly 20 percentage points above the mean.

Figure 12–2 plots each polling place by percentage of four male occupational categories and percentage of electorate votes. Three features distinguish Waimarino's occupational chart from other cases. In the first place, Waimarino had more polling places featuring manuals as the predominant occupational category than did the other nine cases. Although six of the 10 cases had more manuals than they did farmers, it was unusual for manuals to comprise the largest occupational category in most polling places. Secondly, the trend line of farm worker percentages indicates that farm workers were distributed evenly across the electorate. In most other cases, percentages of farm workers increased as polling places became smaller. However, farm workers were a small proportion of male electors (5.7 percent) as indicated in Table 12–2, where all four occupational proportions are set out.

Waimarino shows more dramatic variation between occupational categories than do other electorates. Manuals outnumbered farmers in several areas: by more than seven to one in the largest urban area of Taumaranui; by more than three to one in the group of larger polling places; by almost two to one in the group of smaller polling places; and by nearly three to one across the electorate. In Waimarino, manual workers dominated not just urban areas—as they did in the other eight Labour-voting cases—but also small rural polling places.

Figure 12-2: Polling Places by Percentages of Four Male Occupational Categories, and by Percentage of Electorate Votes, Waimarino Electorate 1935 (N = 67)



Note: White-collar and farm worker data points are omitted for clarity.

Table 12-2: Composition of Four Male Occupational Categories, Waimarino Electorate 1935

Polling Places	<i>Fmr.</i>	<i>Farm wrkr.</i>	<i>Man.</i>	<i>Wh-coll.</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Fmr. %</i>	<i>Farm wrkr. %</i>	<i>Man. %</i>	<i>Wh-coll. %</i>	<i>Total</i>
33 Largest*	856	245	2 599	835	4 535	18.9	5.4	57.3	18.4	100.0
33 Smallest	186	47	320	66	619	30.0	7.6	51.7	10.7	100.0
Tau-maranui	77	25	546	349	977	7.7	2.5	54.8	35.0	100.0
Elect.	1 042	292	2 919	901	5 154	20.2	5.7	56.7	17.4	100.0

\* includes Taumaranui



In figure 12–1, exceptional polling places with low Labour voting were not dominated by manuals, but had higher proportions of farmers and farm workers than manuals and white-collar workers. Farmers averaged 48 percent of males at these polling places, more than double their 20.2 percent electorate proportion. Farm workers averaged 13.5 percent; again more than double their electorate proportion of 5.7 percent. Conversely, manuals dipped to 29.9 percent, or just over half their electorate proportion of 56.7 percent. White-collar workers averaged 8.6 percent, or half their electorate proportion of 17.4 percent. Higher proportions of farmers correlated with lower proportions of Labour votes.

Kirikau and Tuhua, noted above as voting Nationalist overall—but with unusually high numbers of Independent votes—prove to have even lower proportions of manuals, with an aggregate of 17.1 percent of male electors. In addition, they had lower proportions of white-collars (an aggregate 5.7 percent), and higher proportions of farmers (an aggregate 54.3 percent); as well as higher proportions of farm workers (an aggregate 22.9 percent). Relatively few Labour votes in these two polling areas—25.6 percent and 29.8 percent respectively—and an occupational mix that heavily favoured the farmer–farm worker alignment, suggests that Labour lost votes to the third party.

### *Correlations*

Table 12–3 lists correlations between each of the four male occupational categories and each of the three parties.<sup>278</sup> Waimarino reveals alignments of farmers (.31) and farm workers (.22) with Nationalist voting; and manuals (.36) and white-collars (.07—essentially a zero-correlation) with Labour voting, as seen in other cases. Smaller polling places had less evenly distributed occupational categories. There were no entries at all for some categories at a few polling places, compromising correlations. Farm workers were absent in 16 cases, white-collars in 12 cases; farmers in seven cases; and manuals in one case; serving as emphasising the diversity of ‘rural’ electorates.

The Independent candidate’s low poll renders correlations problematic, as noted, with those below .10 (seven of 12 coefficients) regarded as zero-correlations. White-collars in 33 smaller polling places produce the only moderate-level correlation in the table of .38 with the Independent.<sup>279</sup> Farm workers correlate weakly (.14) with the Independent in the group of larger polling places that had 245 of the electorate’s 292 farm workers. It was, nevertheless, the highest correlation of the four occupational categories with the Independent candidate. This implies that farm workers may have been the source of unusually high Independent votes at Kirikau and Tuhua, where the Independent seems to have taken votes from Labour.

<sup>278</sup> Admittedly, the Independent’s electorate vote of 2.5 percent rendered this candidate unable to materially affect the two main contenders, but the correlations are given to provide a contrast with other electorates. The electorate-level correlations, based on data from 67 polling places, are the most robust.

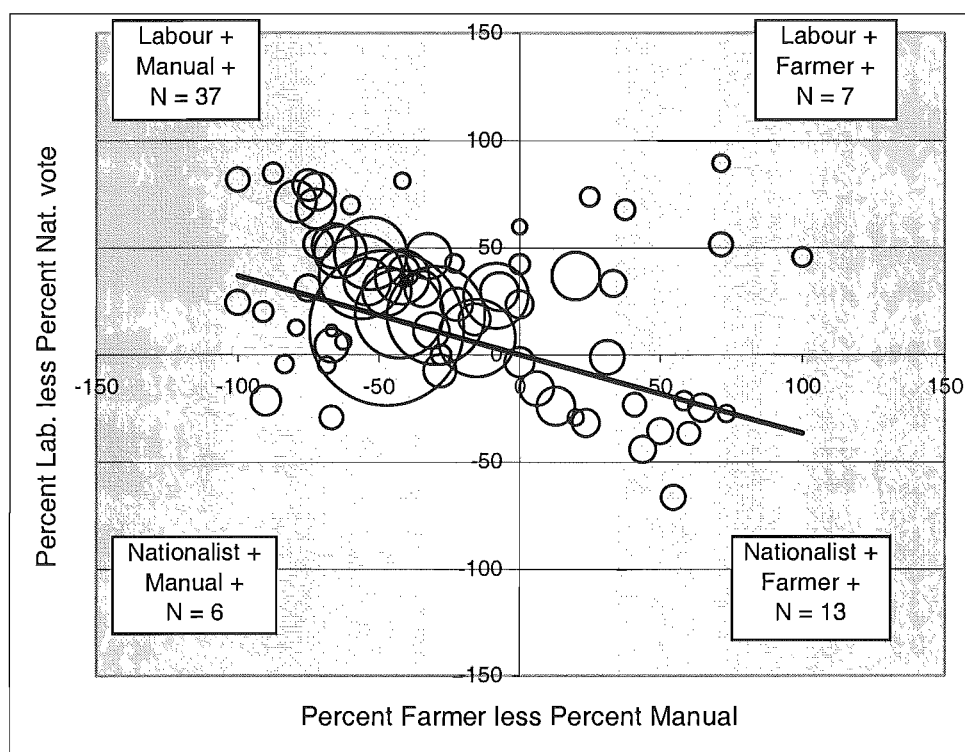
<sup>279</sup> This is an instance of an occupational category varying its party allegiance in different parts of the electorate.

**Table 12–3: Polling Place Correlations between Percentages of Four Male Occupational Categories and Percentages of Votes for Each Candidate, Waimarino Electorate 1935 (N = 67)**

	Polling Places	<i>Farmer</i>	<i>Farm worker</i>	<i>Manual</i>	<i>White-collar</i>
Labour	Largest 33	–.57	–.33	.58	.13
	Smallest 33	–.23	–.19	.27	.06
	Electorate	–.33	–.24	.36	.07
Nationalist	Largest 33	.58	.32	–.59	–.12
	Smallest 33	.21	.18	–.22	–.16
	Electorate	.31	.22	–.32	–.10
Independent	Largest 33	–.01	.14	–.02	–.07
	Smallest 33	.02	.02	–.17	.38
	Electorate	.08	.05	–.16	.12

The bubble chart at figure 12–3 reduces the contest to Labour and Nationalist candidates, and occupations to manuals and farmers. Each of 67 polling places is located on two axes: difference between percentage farmer and percentage manual; and difference between percentage Labour and percentage Nationalist voting. The area of the bubble is a relative indication of the number of votes at that polling place. The plot confirms linearity of the data; and the slope of the trend line indicates that higher proportions of Labour voting tended to be associated with higher proportions of manual workers, not farmers. Forty-three of 67 database polling places had more manuals than farmers, 20 had more farmers than manuals, and four had equal proportions of the two occupational categories. Labour won 47 polling places and Nationalists won 19; one had equal proportions of votes. Polling places were overwhelmingly Labour-voting and manual-dominated.

**Figure 12–3: Polling Places by Percent Farmer Less Percent Manual, and by Percent Labour Less Percent Nationalist Votes, Waimarino Electorate 1935 (N = 67)**



Just over two-thirds (68.4 percent) of Nationalist-voting polling places had a majority of farmers over manuals, whereas just over three-quarters (78.7 percent) of Labour-voting polling places had a majority of manuals over farmers. This reinforces a strong polarity in the origins of most votes, suggesting that Nationalist-won polling places had help from voter sections other than farmers.

From another perspective, manual-oriented polling places comprised 28 percent of Nationalist-won polling places, but farmer-oriented polling places comprised only 14 percent of Labour-won polling places. Waimarino—a ‘special country’ electorate where farmers are supposed to have sided with manual workers—demonstrates the opposite effect to that claimed by the historiography: some manuals voted for the conservatives.

Electorate-level data confirm the suspicion that quite a number of manuals probably voted for the conservatives. On the one hand, Labour-aligned manuals and white-collars comprised 74.1 percent of male electors, but Labour took 60.1 percent of the vote. On the other hand, Nationalist-aligned farmers

and farm workers comprised 25.9 percent of male electors, but Nationalists took 37.4 percent of the vote. The balance of Nationalist votes must have come from Labour-aligned voters.

### *Population changes*

Structurally, the Waimarino electorate changed least of the Labour-voting test cases between 1931 and 1935. As noted above, it was the only test case to show a reduction in the number of its registered electors. This conclusion, however, rests on net electorate changes: differences between total roll numbers on different dates. Gross movements—including the number who left the electorate—were clearly much higher, because the supplementary roll shows 1 203 new voters, an increase of 30.4 percent. Table 12–4 sets out numbers and proportions of the four male occupational categories on the general, supplementary,

**Table 12–4: Percentages of Four Male Occupational Categories on General and Supplementary Electoral Rolls, Waimarino Electorate 1935**

	<i>Farmer</i>	<i>Farm worker</i>	<i>Manual</i>	<i>White-collar</i>	<i>Total</i>
General roll	941	204	2 078	729	3 952
Percent	23.8	5.2	52.6	18.4	100.0
Supp. roll	101	88	841	173	1 203
Percent	8.4	7.3	69.9	14.4	100.0
Percent increase	10.7	43.1	40.5	23.7	N/A
Total roll	1 042	292	2 919	902	5 155
Percent	20.2	5.7	56.6	17.4	99.9

and the total roll. Farmers comprised 23.8 percent of the general roll, but lost relativity when their numbers increased by only 10.7 percent through the supplementary roll to a total of 20.2 percent of male electors. The Waimarino electorate had by far the lowest proportion of farmers in the 10 case studies, which had a median of 35.4 percent farmers.

Farm workers, on the other hand, gained 2.5 percentage points to 5.7 percent of electorate males when supplementary roll increases are taken into account. In line with a small proportion of farmers,

Waimarino's farm workers comprised just over half the median 10.4 percent of the test case electorates' farm workers.

Manuals comprised two-thirds of 1 203 male supplementary roll additions. However, in terms of occupations singled out by Chapman, the data hardly qualify Waimarino as a 'special country' electorate. Eight miners and 51 timber workers on the general roll were supplemented by a further 17 miners and 216 timber workers. The aggregate of the two categories on the total roll was just 5.7 percent.<sup>280</sup>

Waimarino's proportion of 17.4 percent white-collars falls 1.1 percentage points below the 10-test case median of 18.5 percent. As in other rural electorates surveyed, most white-collars lived in the largest urban areas: Taumaranui, Raetihi, and Ohakune alone accounted for 510 of the electorate's 902 white-collar workers.

Population changes during the depression made no significant difference in Waimarino, because its Labour-aligned manuals and white-collars already constituted an aggregate 71 percent of male electors. Nevertheless, the claim of an influx of rural workers during the depression still has force, attested by the aggregate of manuals and white-collars rising to 74.1 percent of male electors. Between 1931 and 1935, 40 polling places listed in both elections. The Labour-won 24 polling places show an average vote increase of 41.3 percent; the nine Nationalist-won polling places show an average vote increase of 23 percent.

### ***Research hypotheses***

*Hypothesis 1: Neither the strong version—that the majority of farmers voted Labour—or the weak version—that Labour won because sufficient farmers combined with other voters—are supported by Waimarino data.*

Farmers correlated positively with Nationalist voting; in any case, Nationalist-aligned farmers and farm workers were too few to account for all Nationalist votes; the shortfall can only have come from Labour-aligned categories of manuals and / or white-collar workers.

*Hypothesis 2: farm workers voted Labour.*

Waimarino data contradict this hypothesis. Farm workers across the electorate aligned weakly but positively with farmers, correlating negatively with Labour (−.24), and positively with Nationalist voting (.22). Areas with most farm workers—the largest 33 polling areas—show a very weak correlation (.14) with minor party voting.

<sup>280</sup> Although these data do suggest that timber workers were under-reported on the electoral roll due to generic occupational descriptions such as 'bushman'.

*Hypothesis 3: white-collar workers voted Labour.*

White-collar correlations generated by whole electorate data are by far the weakest of the four occupational categories, suggesting that white-collars had the strongest tendency to vote for the Nationalist or the Independent candidate. White-collars correlated weakly but positively with Labour voting, in addition to a very weak positive association with minor party voting. The only moderately strong white-collar correlation (.38) was between white-collars in the smallest polling places and voting for the Independent; however, there were few white-collars in these areas.

*Hypothesis 4: minor parties took votes disproportionately from the Nationalists.*

Waimarino data offer some support for this hypothesis, to the extent that urban-dwelling farm workers (the majority of the electorate's farm workers), who otherwise associated positively with Nationalist voting, showed a weak correlation of .14 with Independent voting. Nonetheless, had all 2.5 percent minor party votes gone to Nationalists, it would have made precious little difference to the party's fortunes.

*Hypothesis 5: changes in rural electorates' occupational profiles during the depression favoured the Labour party.*

This hypothesis is supported: occupational categories that aligned with Labour voting in 1935—manuals and white-collars—increased disproportionately during the depression.

*Hypothesis 6: higher voter turnout benefited Labour in 1935*

Waimarino data support this hypothesis: vote increases at Labour-won polling places were almost double those of Nationalist-won polling places.

**Conclusion**

In 1935, Waimarino was a rural electorate with several defining characteristics. It had the largest vote majority of the nine Labour electorates studied; more than half its male electors were manual workers; the electorate strongly supported its incumbent Labour MP; and it was one of just two electorates in this study whose rural hinterland the Labour party penetrated in 1935.

At the same time, there are paradoxes. A sizeable proportion of Waimarino's Labour-aligned manual and white-collar voters voted for the conservatives. Although Waimarino was one of Chapman's 'special country' electorates, only a very small proportion of its manual workers were listed as miners or timber workers on the electoral roll. During the depression, five times more manuals and white-collars than farmers and farm workers registered in Waimarino electorate. This took their combined proportion to almost three-quarters of male electors, but Labour's vote share rose by only 6.3 percentage points to just over 60 percent.

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As noted in the introduction to this chapter, Simpson doubted Waimarino's 'rural' status; in view of the electorate's occupational profile, one is tempted to agree. Nevertheless, in its geographical extension and its limited urbanised areas, Waimarino was a bona fide rural electorate. The question that Simpson raised highlights the disparate nature of New Zealand's 'rural' electorates. In 1935, Waimarino moved further to the political left following the 1930s depression, but not by as much as one might have expected, given that changes to the occupational profile markedly appeared to favour Labour-oriented occupations. In 1938, Langstone and Boles would again contest the Waimarino constituency—now with redrawn boundaries—with Labour taking the two-cornered contest by almost two-to-one.

## Chapter 13: The Egmont Electorate 1935

### *Introduction*

The dairying electorate of Egmont was chosen as a contrasting test case because in 1935, its voters resoundingly rejected the Labour candidate. In 1931, C. A. Wilkinson (Independent) had taken Egmont with a 1 308-vote majority (and 58.7 percent of the valid vote) in a two-cornered contest with another conservative opponent. In 1935, Wilkinson won again with 69.8 percent over his only opponent, J Ross (Labour).<sup>281</sup> In 1938, Wilkinson won again but with his majority pared back to 1931 levels by a new Labour contender, T. E. Trask. In 1935, many of the former Coalition's MPs and cabinet ministers lost their seats, but Wilkinson increased his majority by almost 11 percentage points and took the highest proportion of votes of any opposition MP. The election, moreover, took place when three party politics were drawing to a close and Independent candidates were becoming scarce.

### *Voting Analysis*

In 1935, Labour won only one polling place—Waiteika Rd—by 29 votes to 26. In line with this, the party lost the contest in the five largest booths by 714 votes, 1 935 to 1 221. We have noted that Labour generally performed strongest at the largest polling places and that, on occasion, the party won its electorate majority. Egmont was one of only two electorates in this study where Labour did not win the contest in the five largest polling places.<sup>282</sup> Egmont's voters were more thinly-spread than most of the other electorates in this study. Its largest five polling places had only 41 percent of the electorate vote against a mean 45 percent for the other nine surveyed electorates.<sup>283</sup>

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<sup>281</sup> Nationalists did not compete because Egmont was a safe seat and they could rely on Wilkinson's support. See Rollo, pp. 113–4.

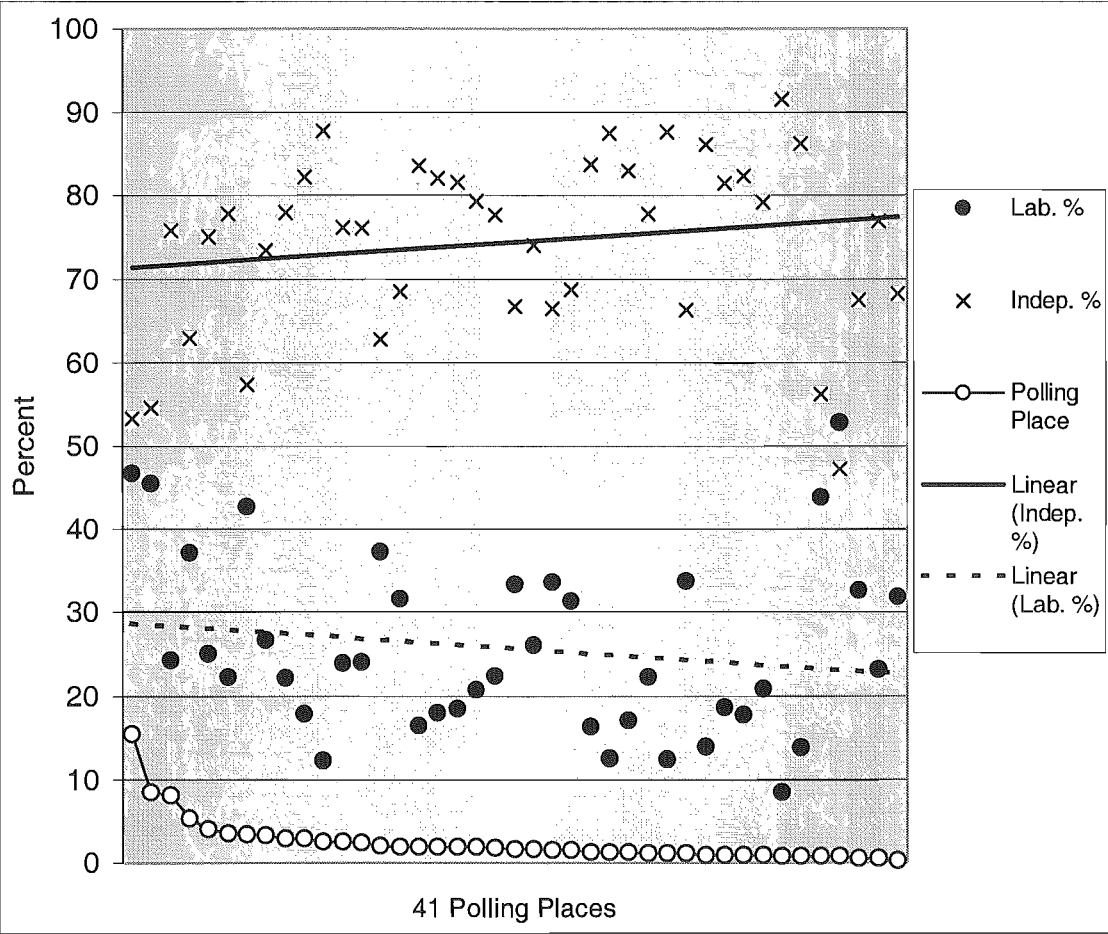
<sup>282</sup> The other electorate was Tauranga, but there Labour's loss in the five largest polling places was just 31 votes.

<sup>283</sup> Waimarino, Raglan, and Bay of Plenty had lower proportions of electorate votes.



Figure 13–1 plots each polling place by its share of the electorate vote as well as by proportions of party vote.

Figure 13–1: Polling Places by Party Vote and by Electorate Vote, Egmont Electorate 1935 (N = 39)<sup>284</sup>

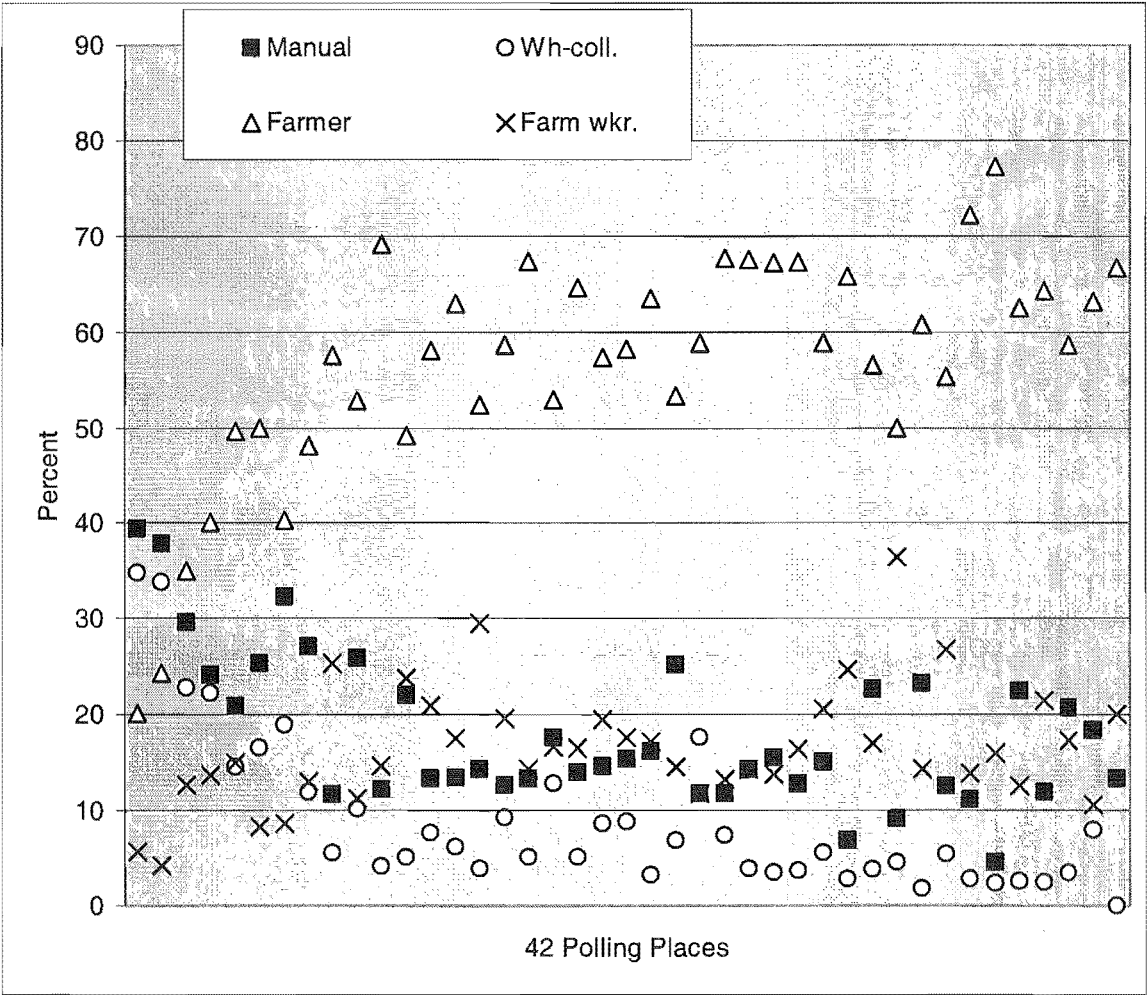


Across the electorate, farmers comprised 46.5 percent of male voters, the highest proportion of farmers in the 10 surveyed electorates and roughly twice the number of manuals—23.9 percent. The other two categories—29.6 percent of male voters—comprised white-collar workers with 16 percent and farm workers with 13.6 percent. The combined proportion of farmers and farm workers was a commanding 70.4 percent—

<sup>284</sup> The 43 polling places listed in the election results were reduced to 41 in the database; Mangahume (39 votes in the results—0.5 percent of the electorate vote) listed one individual (a white-collar worker), and has been excluded. The polling place would otherwise record 100 percent white-collar workers and compete on an unfair basis. The largest polling place was Eltham with two polling places: Eltham (Courthouse), 402 votes and Eltham (Oddfellows Hall), 872 votes—together comprising 15.4 percent of the electorate votes—aggregated here because the rolls give insufficient address information to allocate voters to one or other polling place.

equivalent to the vote for the Independent, although this should not be taken to mean that all farmers voted Independent, as we shall see later. The plot is dominated by Independent vote proportions, which increased as polling places became smaller. At the same time, farm worker proportions also increased, implying a voting alignment of farmers and farm workers.

Figure 13-2: Polling Places by Percentages of Four Male Occupational Categories, Egmont Electorate 1935 (N=41)



Note: data sorted by decreasing polling place vote share.

Conversely, along with a reduced Labour vote, manual and white-collar proportions decrease as polling places reduce in size. Labour gained the bulk of its votes from manuals and white-collars at urban polling places where there were fewer farmers. Egmont's five largest polling places, for example, together contributed 3 156 votes (41 percent) against 4 449 from the remaining 36 polling places. In so doing, the largest five gave Labour 38.7 percent of its votes, significantly more than the party's electorate share of 30.2 percent. The other 36 polling places gave Labour 24.3 percent, significantly less than its electorate share.

Polling place proportions of Independent votes rose dramatically in rural areas. At urban polling places to the left of the plot is a substantial gap between the trend lines for Independent voting and for farmers plus farm worker proportions. This implies a degree of conservative voting by manuals and / or white-collars. The smallest polling places (to the right of the plot) had insufficient proportions of manuals and white-collars to provide the Labour vote share. This implies a degree of left voting by farmers and / or farm workers. Farmers outnumbered farm workers by roughly three to one, and so probably cast more of such votes for the left.

### Correlations

Table 13–1 gives the correlations between proportions of males in each occupational category and the proportions of votes for each candidate at each of polling place. Wilkinson's strong majority is not reflected in stronger correlations between occupations and Independent voting, which are unexceptional at the median level of the nine Labour-voting rural electorates of this study. Although the electorate decisively rejected Labour, Egmont's farmers (.49) and farm workers (.18) show only middling correlations—compared with

**Table 13–1: Polling Place Correlations between Party Voting Proportions and Four Male Occupational Categories, Egmont Electorate 1935 (N = 41)**

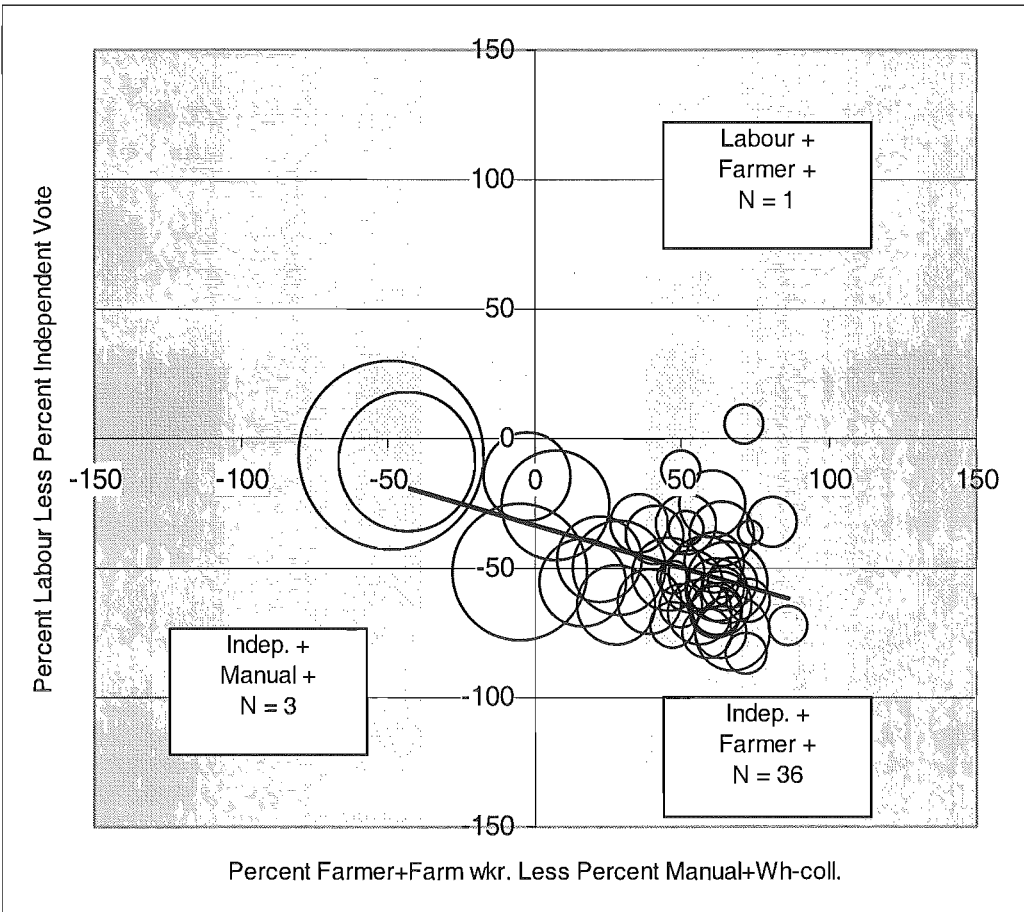
	<i>Farmer</i>	<i>Farm worker</i>	<i>Manual</i>	<i>White-collar</i>
Labour	– .49	– .18	.44	.43
Independent	.49	.18	– .44	– .43

other electorates studied—with conservative (in this case, Independent) voting. For their part, manuals (.44) and white-collars (.43) show only middling correlations with Labour voting, implying cross-voting by both combinations.

*Distribution of occupations and votes*

The bubble chart at figure 13–3 aggregates farmer and farm worker data, and manual and white-collar data, because both members of each pair have the same direction of association with Labour voting. Although this oversimplifies the relationships, it shows the most important elements. We see that 36 of the 41 polling places had an occupational profile dominated by farmers and farm workers—only four polling places had a majority of manuals and white-collars and all four voted Independent. Ironically, the one

**Figure 13–3: Polling Places by Percent Farmer Less Percent Manual and by Percent Labour Less Percent Independent Vote, Egmont Electorate 1935 (N = 39)**



polling place (Waiteika Rd) that voted Labour had an occupational profile dominated by farmers (64 percent) and farm workers (21.4 percent), with only a few manuals (11.9 percent) and white-collars (2.4 percent).

We have seen that just four polling places had a majority of t manuals and white-collars. As is the case in all the surveyed electorates, the largest five polling places had more manuals and white-collars than farmers and farm workers. In Egmont, the crucial difference came from the distribution of white-collars. Although white-collar electorate proportions were below the median of the 10 electorates in this study, white-collars concentrated in urban areas: the largest five polling places had 656 manuals (33 percent), 560 white-collars (28.2 percent), 596 farmers (30 percent), and 176 farm workers (8.9 percent). Although the manual–white-collar alignment outnumbered farmers and farm workers, the relatively low ratio of manuals to farmers is arguably more relevant, given the stronger correlation coefficients of manuals in this study. Egmont was exceptional: one of only two electorates in this study where farmer numbers exceeded manual numbers in urban areas.<sup>285</sup>

The orientation of the graph trend line indicates a positive association between farmer–farm worker proportions and Independent vote proportions, and conversely, a negative association with Labour vote proportions. Waiteika Rd—noted above as the one polling place that voted Labour (by just 5.5 percentage points)—had a combination of farmers and farm workers that outnumbered manuals and white-collars by a factor of six to one. Eltham and Opunake on the other hand, the two largest polling places with 1 821 votes (23.9 percent of the electorate), voted conservative by 6.6 and 9.2 percent respectively, despite having more than 70 percent of males in the Labour-aligned manual and white-collar category.

### *Demographic change*

Egmont data test Malone’s claim, highlighted earlier, that increased numbers of rural workers swelled the vote to Labour’s advantage. The gain or loss in each occupational category at each polling place<sup>286</sup> is correlated with the change in the Labour vote from 1931 to 1935.<sup>287</sup> The change in manual proportions correlates positively (.26) with the proxy Labour vote change, meaning that larger changes in the proportion

<sup>285</sup> The other was Waikato, an electorate also exceptional for vote-splitting (see Waikato analysis).

<sup>286</sup> The method calculated the supplementary roll percentage of each occupation at each polling place as a proportion of the general roll. As previously noted, the general roll was closed some six months prior to a general election. The supplementary roll forms a proxy measure of demographic change since the previous election, as it updates the general roll by listing those new to the electorate, as well as deletions, changes of address, occupation and so on.

<sup>287</sup> Although there was no Labour candidate here in 1931, the vote for the alternative Independent amounts to an ‘anti-mainstream conservative vote’. The Labour vote in 1935 also constitutes an ‘anti-mainstream conservative vote’. The change from 1931 to 1935 is referred to here as the ‘proxy Labour’ vote change. Since the contest was two-cornered, the correlations with Nationalist voting, of course, have the same strength but the opposite direction.

of manuals at each polling place correlate positively with larger changes in the proportions of the proxy Labour vote. The farmer correlation is  $-.32$ , that is, larger changes in the Labour vote correlate positively with smaller changes in farmer proportions. The correlation of farm workers with Labour is  $-.12$ , a result consistent with the parallels between farmer and farm worker associations highlighted previously in this chapter.<sup>288</sup> Although the coefficients are not particularly strong, they are systematic and consistent with other results; therefore, Malone's claim is supported by the results.

### *Voter turnout*

The pattern of Egmont's voter turnout differs from that of the other rural electorates of the study. In three of the four elections between 1928 and 1938, Egmont's turnout was higher than the average of the other eight. In 1928, Egmont was higher by 5.6 percentage points; in 1931, by 3.7 percentage points; in 1938, by 2.1 percentage points. The exception was in 1935, when Egmont's average was 3.7 percentage points lower, a loss of 7.4 percentage points between 1931 and 1935.<sup>289</sup>

To put it another way, Egmont's turnout rose just 1.8 percentage points between 1931 and 1935, while the average of other dairying areas rose by more than 10 percentage points. The reason for Egmont's turnout variation is unclear. Nevertheless, the data can be used to test the Malone–Nagel hypothesis, noted earlier, that lower turnout was to Labour's detriment. The percentage point difference between proportions of the total electorate vote at each polling place was calculated for 1931 and 1935. This measure of voter change was correlated with the Labour vote share at each polling place in 1935. This resulted in a positive correlation of  $.35$ , meaning that larger polling place changes were associated with higher Labour vote proportions. Therefore, the hypothesis holds, although lack of voter survey data from the 1930s means there is no way to identify occupational categories involved.

### *Research hypotheses*

*Hypothesis 1: the majority of farmers voted Labour (strong version); alternatively, Labour won because sufficient farmers combined with other voters (weak version).*

The Egmont electorate was chosen as a test case because of its heavy anti-Labour vote in 1935. The sheer size of the conservative majority suggested stronger correlations between proportions of farmers and proportions of Independent votes, but these were about the median of the 10 surveyed electorates. The heavy

<sup>288</sup> The white-collar correlation was  $-.06$ , but in this case there were no white-collars on the supplementary roll for 26 of 39 surveyed polling places—every polling place showed entries for the other three categories—so the result is disregarded.

<sup>289</sup> Although Egmont's turnout rose by just 1.8 percentage points between 1931 and 1935, the comparison with the average of the other electorates is more instructive.

Independent majority is explained by the relative size of the respective occupational categories, in particular, the abnormally high proportion of farmers and the exceptionally small proportion of manuals.

*Hypothesis 2: farm workers voted Labour.*

Analysis of correlations does not support this hypothesis.

*Hypothesis 3: white-collar workers voted Labour.*

This claim is supported by Egmont data, because white-collars' association with Labour voting is positive across the electorate. White-collars were situated in the more urban areas of the electorate, precisely where Labour voting was strongest.

*Hypothesis 4: minor party votes came disproportionately from the Nationalists.<sup>290</sup>*

This claim does not apply to Egmont, a two-cornered contest.

*Hypothesis 5: changes in rural electorates' occupational profiles during the depression favoured the Labour party.*

Larger increases in proportions of manual and white-collar workers were associated with increased proportions of votes against the conservative incumbent.

*Hypothesis 6: higher voter turnout benefited Labour in 1935*

Polling places that showed the largest increases in vote numbers also tended to have higher proportions of Labour voting. This is not quite the same thing, but does lend provisional support to the claim.

## **Conclusion**

This study included the Egmont electorate for its apparently exceptional vote, which featured a strong conservative vote that went against the mood of the country. On the face of it, Egmont appeared fully-stocked with farmers who remained staunchly conservative. In fact, Egmont's farmers voted very much the same as farmers in other electorates in this study: in the main, for conservative candidates. Egmont re-elected its conservative MP because he gained the support of some of the electorate's manuals. In addition, Egmont had the highest proportion of farmers; but as we saw, the only Labour-won polling place in 1935 had more farmers than manuals, but *every* polling place with more manuals than farmers voted conservative. Without a minor party to consider, with abnormally low voter turnout, and with negligible growth in its electoral roll, Egmont was characterised by conservative-voting manual workers.

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<sup>290</sup> In this case, from the conservative-aligned Independent candidate.

## Part III: Further Investigations

### Chapter 14: The Waikato Electorate 1938

#### *Introduction*

The Waikato result in 1938 was a stunning reversal of the previous election, when Waikato became one of the first of Labour's new dairy electorates to return to the conservative fold. The conventional explanation has been that farmers became dissatisfied with their new champion: an explanation contingent on dairy farmers having changed allegiance in 1935. This thesis provides an alternative explanation. In 1938, there were three important differences compared with 1935: the first is that the electorate reverted to a two-cornered contest between the two dominant parties of 1935—Labour and Nationalist, now known as National. Secondly, both parties fielded new candidates, although the effect of this is not quantifiable. Thirdly, Waikato was a substantially altered electorate following the redrawing of electorate boundaries in 1937. This alteration impacted on the electorate's occupational profile to Labour's detriment.

#### *Voting analysis*

In 1938, National's W. S. Goosman took the seat with 6 944 votes (63.4 percent) from Labour's J. W. Neate with 4 016 votes (36.6 percent). As usual, Labour did relatively better at the larger urban polling places. At the top three, for example, Labour took an aggregate 46.2 percent of the vote, well ahead of its electorate share although still short of a majority. Labour exceeded its electorate percentage at nine of 43 polling places,<sup>291</sup> but could win only one. The six largest polling places, however, still constituted 49.8 percent of the electorate vote, compared with 50.9 percent in 1935. As polling place votes decreased in rural areas, National's vote share increased.

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<sup>291</sup> Election results list 45 polling places. The database aggregates Maungatautari, Hall (87 votes) and Maungatautari, School (115 votes) because roll information is insufficient to allocate voters to one or the other.



Figure 14-1: Polling Places by Decreasing Percentage of Electorate Vote, Percentages of Four Male Occupational Categories, and Party Vote Percentages, Waikato Electorate 1938 (N = 38)

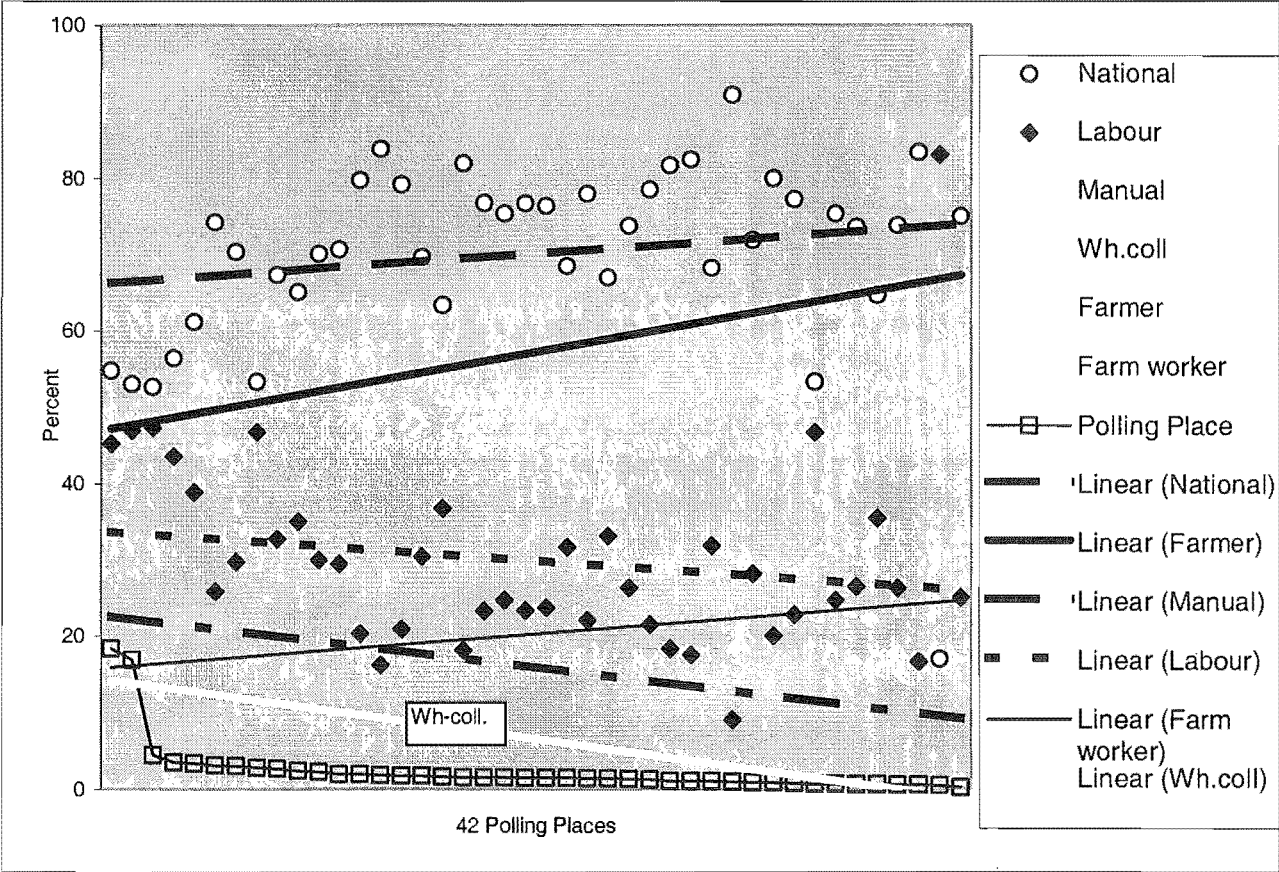


Figure 14-1 plots each polling place by percentages of Labour and National votes, and by percentage share of the electorate vote (the plot also shows occupational category data referred to in the next section). Labour's trend line indicates that that the party performed relatively better at larger, more urban polling places and steadily lost ground to National in rural reaches of the electorate. This contrasts with the four-party data from 1935, when burgeoning Country and Democrat party votes in rural areas carved more from Nationalists than they did from Labour. In the two-party contest of 1938, it appears that National has picked up the former third-party vote, leaving Labour with a smaller vote share than in 1935.

*Occupational profile*

Figure 14-1 shows how National voting and proportions of farmers and farm workers increase as the polling place vote share decreases. Conversely, Labour voting falls along with proportions of manuals and white-collar workers. From 1935 to 1938, the farmer category gained 0.1 percentage points, the farm

worker category 0.8, and the white-collar category 3.8. The commensurate loss was by manuals, down by 4.8 percentage points.

**Table 14–1: Percentages of Four Male Occupational Categories in Three Groups of Polling Places, Waikato Electorate 1938**

Polling Places	<i>Farmers</i>	<i>Farm workers</i>	<i>Manuals</i>	<i>White-collars</i>	<i>Total</i>
All 42	44.3	16.3	23.6	15.8	100.0
Nine with highest Labour vote *	30.3	13.1	41.9	14.8	100.1
33 with lowest Labour vote	61.8	23.0	10.4	4.8	100.0

Note: \* signifies polling places where Labour candidate exceeded his percentage electorate share.

The six largest polling places with almost half the electorate vote had the following occupational proportions (with 1935 figures in parentheses): farmers, 28.5 percent (35.7); farm workers, 10.1 percent (14.6); manuals, 34.6 percent (32.3); and white-collars, 26.8 percent (17.3). In fact, there are fewer manuals at these polling places in 1938 but they constituted a higher percentage of the total because there are substantially fewer farmers and farm workers, while white-collar proportions are 9.5 percentage points higher. The reason for the changes is the inclusion within the new electorate boundaries of such places as Te Awamutu (second to Cambridge in males on the roll) with 15.1 percent farmers, 5.3 percent farm workers, 43.4 percent manuals, and 36.2 percent white-collars.

### *Correlations between occupations and party votes*

Table 14–2 gives correlations between occupational category proportions and party vote proportions. These data confirm that farmers and farm workers associated positively with National, and manuals and white-collars associated positively with Labour, maintaining the direction of correlation evident in 1935. Although the coefficients of the two main occupations are quite high, obviously there is some cross-party voting. The coefficients suggest that farmers were more likely to change party allegiance, since theirs is the weaker coefficient. This suggestion, however, raises a question about National's 63.4 percent vote: farmers and farm workers associated with National voting, and together constituted 60.6 percent of the male voters. Manuals and white-collars constituted 39.4 percent of male voters, and Labour took 44 percent of the vote. Except for farm workers' negative association with Labour voting, associations are stronger in all cases than in 1935—expected, given that there are only two candidates.

Correlations between four occupational category proportions and Labour vote proportions across all polling places are: farmer  $-.79$ , farm worker  $-.35$ , manual  $.88$ , white-collar  $.38$ . Although the manual–Labour correlation is strong, Labour polled poorly: the proportion of manuals had fallen by almost five percentage points largely because of an increase in white-collars—who associated less strongly with Labour—and partly because of very small increases in farm workers and, to a lesser extent, farmers. Although manuals and white-collars both associated positively with Labour voting, they comprised only 39.4 percent of the vote.

**Table 14–2: Polling Place Correlations between Male Occupational Proportions and Labour Voting Proportions, Waikato Electorate 1938 (N = 42)**

	<i>Farmer</i>	<i>Farm worker</i>	<i>Manual</i>	<i>White-collar</i>
Labour	$-.79$	$-.35$	$.88$	$.38$
National	$.79$	$.35$	$-.88$	$-.38$

*Cross-party voting*

Table 14–3 indicates differences between correlations when measured at the largest six and the smallest six polling places. Both farmers and manuals show weakened associations with their party of choice: urban farmers’ correlation with Labour weakens by  $.08$  (10 percent), but urban manuals’ weakens by  $.26$  (30 percent), suggesting that cross-party voting was more prevalent by manuals than by farmers. In addition, nearly three-quarters of the electorate’s manuals were found at the six largest polling places, but only about one-third of the farmers.

Almost one-third of urban farm workers are found at the six largest polling places, and they show stronger correlations there than across the electorate as a whole. The ramifications of urban farm worker correlations for the overall party vote are lessened by their electorate proportion of less than 16 percent, and by the relatively small degree of coefficient change. Urban white-collars’ correlation ( $.60$ ), on the other hand, is about 58 percent stronger than the electorate figure ( $.38$ ), and applies to 83 percent of the electorate’s white-collars. There is some suggestion of cross-party voting by rural white-collars, because their correlation with Labour turns negative ( $-.33$ ). Nevertheless, the small number of rural white-collars (with no white-collars at three of the six smallest polling places) minimises the electoral effect.

**Table 14–3: Correlations between Four Male Occupational Proportions and Labour Voting Proportions in Three Groups of Polling Places, Waikato Electorate 1938**

	<i>Farmer</i>			<i>Farm worker</i>			<i>Manual</i>			<i>White-collar</i>		
Polling Places		N	%		N	%		N	%		N	%
Largest 6	-.71	866	31	-.40	307	30	.62	1 053	72	.60	813	83
Smallest 6	-.84	73	3	-.43	31	3	.95	26	2	-.33	5	0.5
All 42	-.79	2 766	44*	-.35	1 020	16*	.88	1 470	24*	.38	984	16*

Notes: 1. In all cases, the correlations with National are the same coefficient but in the opposite direction; for example, the farmer-to-National correlation at the largest six polling places is .71

2. ‘%’ indicates the percentage of that category the N constitutes. For example, the 866 farmers at the six largest polling places comprise 31 percent of total electorate farmers. The ‘%\*’ indicates the percentage of all males on the roll.

3. The largest six polling places had 49.8 percent of the electorate vote.

We return to the question raised earlier concerning party vote proportions relative to the size of their aligned occupational categories. Assuming for the sake of argument that all manuals and white-collars voted Labour (and that all their spouses and voting age family members did too), there is a shortfall of 4.6 percentage points between the aggregate proportion of voters and Labour’s 44 percent vote. This is higher than the shortfall of 2.8 percentage points between National votes and the combined farmer–farm worker alignment. On the face of it, Labour got more farmer–farm worker votes than National did manual–white-collar votes. Nevertheless, the real force of table 15–2 data lies in the high proportion of manuals present at urban polling places, as well as a 30 percent coefficient change. These data strongly suggest that overall electorate figures reveal only net effects, and that many more manuals than farmers were involved in cross-party voting.

### *Structural electorate change, 1935–1938*

At first glance, Waikato did not look substantially different for the 1938 election, with a 7.5 percent increase in registered electors—typical for the times—and 44 polling places, the same number as in 1935. The major change was to the electorate’s boundaries following the 1936 census. The new boundaries reflected incremental population shifts since 1926, and the electorate swung south and east.<sup>292</sup> Eighteen

<sup>292</sup> Urbanisation necessitated a new urban electorate in Wellington, which replaced the Manawatu district electorate of Oroua. In consequence, other North Island electorates were redrawn. See McRobie, *Electoral Atlas*, pp. 90–91.

polling places remained from 1935, with 24 additions and 21 removals. Cambridge, with 1 728 votes, narrowly lost its pre-eminent position to the new urban centre of Te Awamutu with 1 877 votes.<sup>293</sup> Leamington was a distant third with 450 votes. Morrinsville, formerly in second position, shed more than 1 200 votes and slipped to tenth position.

Waikato remained a rural electorate with voting dominated by two large urban centres. Here, manuals outnumbered farmers, and a Labour-voting alignment of manuals and white-collars outnumbered a National-voting alignment of farmers and farm workers. Te Awamutu's 1938 occupational profile was (with Cambridge in parentheses): manual, 43.4 percent (30.8 percent); white-collar, 36.2 percent (26.6 percent); farmer, 15.1 percent (30.8 percent); and farm worker, 5.3 percent (11.8). A clear shift towards Labour-oriented occupations was unable to secure even these two polling places, which took 45.2 percent and 46.9 percent of the vote respectively.

**Table 14-4: Polling Place Changes in Male Occupational Categories, Waikato Electorate 1935-1938**

Polling Places	Number	Farmer %	Farm worker %	Manual %	White-collar %	Total %
Remaining from 1935	18	54.7	20.2	16.8	8.3	100
Deleted in 1938	21	55.2	15.2	24.0	5.6	100
New in 1938	24	59.1	20.3	15.3	5.3	100

Unlike the skew towards manuals and white-collars in Te Awamutu and Cambridge, most polling place profiles did not support Labour voting. This is seen in data from three groups of polling places. The first group comprises the 18 polling places from 1935 that remain in 1938. Half show an increase in voters (an average gain of 28.3 percent) and half show a decrease (an average loss of 93.2 percent). In 1938, polling places remaining from 1935 have smaller numbers of votes: this appears counter-intuitive, given that electorates, including Waikato, have overall gains in voters; but the reason for a net loss at these 18 polling places will become apparent in the analysis of new polling places later in this section.

<sup>293</sup> Te Awamutu had formerly been part of the Waitomo electorate.

The loss of votes at the polling places remaining from 1935 involves all four occupational categories. There were 21.2 percent fewer farmers, 21.3 percent fewer farm workers, and 20.9 percent fewer white-collars, all losses of a similar order. Manual numbers dropped sharply, down by 40.3 percent. The farmer–farm worker aggregate loss was 21.2 percent, and the manual–white-collar aggregate loss was 34.0 percent. Positive correlations of manuals and white-collars with Labour, and farmers and farm workers with National, imply that Labour suffered greater vote losses as a consequence of polling place changes.

Fewer manuals imply smaller proportions relative to other occupations. In 1938, the 18 polling places remaining from 1935 (with 1935 proportions in parentheses), averaged 54.7 percent farmers (51.2), 20.2 percent farm workers (20.2), 16.8 percent manuals (21.0), and 8.3 percent white-collars (7.6). Comparison of 1935 and 1938 occupational proportions shows that the electorate underwent changes that favoured National-leaning occupations.

The second group of polling places that informs electorate change in 1938 consists of 21 polling places that disappeared in electorate boundary changes. Occupational profiles of these polling places in 1935, together with previous correlations, indicate probable party preferences in 1938. In 1935, polling places that would disappear in 1938 had an average of 55.2 percent farmers, 15.2 percent farm workers, 24.0 percent manuals, and 5.6 percent white-collars. Compared with those that were to remain in 1938, these polling places had 0.5 percentage point more farmers, and 5.0 percentage points fewer farm workers, although the effect of the latter was tempered by their relatively small numbers.

In addition, there were 2.7 percentage points fewer white-collars, but the major loss was in manuals—down by 7.2 percentage points. The loss of these polling places meant a loss of extra farmers (who would have tended to vote National), but these were outweighed by the loss of a larger number of manuals and some white-collars, who would have tended to vote Labour. Again, changes favoured National-voting occupations.

A third test group of polling places, noted above, consists of 24 polling places new to the Waikato electorate in 1938. In this case, 1 357 farmers (a mean 59.1 percent per polling place), and 486 farm workers (24.5 percent) comprised large numbers of potential National voters. Against this, 908 manuals (15.3 percent), and 360 white-collars (5.3 percent), comprised a smaller number of potential Labour voters. This third group reinforces the likely electoral effects of the absence of the second group of polling places. Again, structural electorate change favoured National.

All three groups of polling places used to assess occupational profile change in the Waikato electorate indicate that, in 1938, Labour-oriented manuals and white-collar workers lost ground to National-voting

farmers and farm workers. The difference, however, is not enough to account for the election result—manuals and white-collars totalled 40.4 percent in 1935, and 39.4 percent in 1938.

### *Conclusion*

In 1935 and 1938, Waikato's occupational profile—a majority of farmers and farm workers—consistently favoured conservative parties. To a degree, the occupational profile of the electorate changed towards generally Labour-aligned manuals and white-collars during the depression, assisting the Labour party in 1935. A less substantial shift in occupational profiles occurred between 1935 and 1938, a shift that favoured National-aligned occupations. In addition, National voting by manuals appears to have offset Labour voting by farmers.

Nevertheless, Labour lost Waikato in 1938 largely because the conservative vote was not split. The 1931 contest had been a close one between two conservative candidates, but a four-way split in 1935 allowed Labour to take the seat in the face of a total conservative vote of 56 percent. Labour's 1935 win in Waikato signalled a brief incursion into a strongly conservative farming electorate, when votes for minor parties consistently correlated with occupations that also correlated with Nationalist voting. The 1938 election saw a return to two parties, which polarised the vote and handed defeat to Labour because its aligned occupations were outnumbered.

Hypothesis 8 from the historiography claimed that Labour's loss of 'butter seats' in 1938 was due to farmers withdrawing support. Nevertheless, this typical 'butter seat' demonstrates no systematic support for the claim. This finding is constrained by the data coming from just one case, but the consistency of the results obtained from these rural electorates suggests that the study of additional electoral rolls in 1938 is likely to posit structural electorate change as a greater influence than voter realignment.

## Part IV: Conclusion and Appendices

### Chapter 15: Conclusion

As explained in previous chapters, a convention in New Zealand historiography holds that rural electorates in the 1930s comprised mostly farmers, and that many, if not most, farmers changed allegiance to the Labour party in the general election of 1935. Because the election followed hard on the heels of the 1930s economic depression, analysts assumed that small farmers in 1935 had replicated small farmers' pivotal role in the election of the Liberals in 1890. This thesis has used comprehensive data analysis in 10 rural electorates to challenge the convention.

The main claim tested was that some significant proportion of farmers changed political allegiance in 1935. If true, that behaviour would be most evident in electorates with the highest numbers of farmers. Similarly, if there were problems with the claim, even in areas with high farmer numbers, then the claim would be severely compromised. All 10 rural electorates featured more than half of their population classed as 'rural' by the Representation Commission, and had high concentrations of farmers. Dairy farmers were both the most numerous of the different classifications of farmer as well as being quintessentially small farmers.

Electorates differed in ways that provided a cross-section of cases within the dairying sub-group. Nine electorates voted Labour, the other—Egmont—was a contrast case, because it re-elected its conservative Independent candidate with a higher majority at a time when most rural electorates joined the swing to the Labour party. One electorate had an incumbent Labour MP; another electorate had previously voted Labour in 1928 but went back to conservative voters in 1931. Three of the nine Labour electorates—all Chapman's 'special country' electorates in which large numbers of manual workers in certain 'industrialised' occupations tended to be unionised and concentrated in certain localities—were won by outright majorities. The



remaining six cases had pluralities as small as 0.3 percent, and all gave to third parties a slice of the vote that was higher than the Labour MP's winning plurality.

Primary sources used in this study are electoral rolls and election results at polling place level. These sources have important advantages: votes were recorded down to single figures in the smallest polling places, rolls were more frequently updated than were census data, and voter registration was compulsory. Nevertheless, electoral rolls have two important disadvantages: men's but not women's occupations were listed, and men's and women's votes were not separately enumerated at polling place level. Chapter 3 defended the necessary assumption that wives' and daughters' political allegiances would not have differed significantly from those of fathers and husbands.

This chapter begins with a summary of findings under each of seven modes of analysis: party voting, occupational profiles, correlations between occupations and party votes, distribution of occupations and votes, minor party voting, population changes prior to the 1935 election, and voter turnout. A short summary of the 10 case studies includes an assessment of different factors that bore upon the election result. Results for each of the research hypotheses are given, along with an overall summation of the thesis.

### *Voting profile*

Patterns of party allegiance vary from electorate to electorate, and between voter sections within electorates. An important characteristic of all these rural electorates was huge variation in polling place vote numbers. Rural electorates of the day had epicentres of Labour voting—a few large towns with high proportions of manual and white-collar workers—where Labour generally took most, if not all, its winning margin of votes. The largest urban centre—sometimes with three or four individual polling places—generally supplied between 15 and 18 percent of the electorate votes. The aggregate vote in the largest five polling places ranges from 35 percent in Bay of Plenty to 57 percent in Thames. In only two electorates did Labour not win the aggregate vote of the largest five polling places. One was conservative-voting Egmont, with the highest combined proportion of farmers and farm workers of the 10 cases. The other was Tauranga, a five-way contest with a wafer-thin Labour plurality, a third party vote of 21.8 percent, and two other minor parties to split the vote even further.

The election was remarkably close in certain ways. For example, across the 505 polling places in this study, the average Labour vote was 41.8 percent, whereas the average Nationalist vote was 42.0 percent. Yet, the average Labour margin was 8.4 percent (790 votes), indicating that Labour-won polling places tended to have more voters than those won by Nationalists. Had Labour not performed disproportionately well at the large

polling places, the party's weaker performance in more rural areas would have left many seats to the conservatives.

### *Occupational profiles*

Previous electorate typologies were based on misleading assumptions. They gave the impression that farmer numbers in rural electorates were very much higher than that now indicated by electoral roll analysis.

Farmers, with a mean 34 percent of male electors in the surveyed electorates, were some four percentage points fewer than manual workers. Manual worker numbers exceeded farmers in six of the 10 cases in the study, invalidating claims for farmers' party allegiance based on electorate-level voting.

Farmer numbers were proportionately higher in the more rural areas of these electorates, as were, generally, farm worker numbers. White-collar workers tended to concentrate in urban areas, an expected finding given their tendency to be associated with secondary and service industries. Across the 10 cases, farm workers' mean 10 percent of male electors constituted just over half of white-collars' mean 17 percent. Taken together, therefore, since manuals and white-collars showed consistent alignment with the Labour party, manual and white-collar workers constituted a surprising 55 percent of male electors in these 10 cases. However, the concentrations of manuals and white-collar in relatively few polling places are revealed in average percentages of occupations across the 505 database polling places: the manual plus white-collar aggregation averaged 39.4 percent per polling place, against 60.6 percent per polling place for the farmer plus farm worker aggregation.

### *Correlations between occupations and party votes*

Correlating occupational categories with party voting produced remarkably consistent results across the test cases. Nine of ten electorates showed a similar reciprocal pattern of correlations. Farmers correlate consistently positively with Nationalist voting, and consistently negatively with Labour voting. The correlations dispel the claim that farmers generally voted Labour in 1935. There are three correlations produced, here detailed moving from the specific to the general. The first summary is of the within-electorate correlations that were part of the analysis of each case electorate. Table 15–1 summarises essential data of the 10 electorates in order of weakest to strongest Labour correlations between Labour voting and farmer percentages.

In Table 15–1, strength of correlations varies. Bay of Plenty and Tauranga, where the minor party vote was strongest, show weak correlations. Hauraki, Waikato, and Manawatu electorates, where the minor party vote is middling, show mid-range correlations. Waimarino's mid-range correlations go with a small minor party vote. Nevertheless, there is a general tendency for the minor party vote to weaken the association between

occupations and mainstream party votes. Across the 10 cases, proportions of farmers correlated positively with proportions of Nationalist voting. A solitary exception—Tauranga—proved to have a moderate positive correlation of .24 between farmers and Country party voting that helped to erode support for Nationalists to a zero correlation level.

**Table 15–1: Percentages of Party Vote, Male Occupational Proportions, and Correlations between Farmers and Major Party Voting, 10 Rural Electorates 1935**

	<i>Vote percent</i>			<i>Occupation percent</i>				<i>Correlation</i>	
	Lab.	Nat.	3rd party	Frmr	Farm wkr	Manual	Wh-coll	Lab : Farmer	Nat : Farmer
Bay of Pl	43	36	21	30	17	33	20	– .16	.25
Waimarino	59	37	3	20	6	57	17	– .33	.31
Tauranga	35	35	22	39	10	30	20	–.24	–.03
Marsden	48	45	6	36	6	38	21	– .34	.28
Egmont	30	70**	n/a	45	14	25	16	– .45	.45**
Hauraki	45	41	14	32	7	39	22	– .45	.56
Waikato	44	36	13	45	15	28	12	– .49	.38
Thames	55	43**	2	22	5	54	19	– .56	.55
Manawatu	35	35	15	36	12	39	14	– .62	.54
Raglan	56	37	6	39	11	38	11	– .73	.71
mean	45	42	11	34	10	38	17	–.45*	.46*

Notes: Percentages rounded to nearest whole number; correlations rounded to two decimal places.

\* median.

\*\* Independent candidate

The second level of correlation, set out in table 15–2, involves the data of the 10 electorates correlated with each other. The data set involves only 10 cases and does not have the statistical reliability of individual electorate correlations where the data of many polling places were involved. This table is

**Table 15–2: Whole Electorate Correlations between Proportions of Male Occupational Categories and Party Voting, 10 Rural Electorates 1935**

		<i>Farmer</i>	<i>Farm worker</i>	<i>Manual</i>	<i>White-collar</i>
Labour	Correlation	– .66*	– .55	.77*	– .06
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.04	.10	.01	.86
Nationalist	Correlation	.32	.07	– .29	.06
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.37	.85	.41	.86

\* Correlation is significant at the .05 level (2-tailed).

included to present all possibilities and includes significance levels because the 10 cases represent only a fraction of the 1935 electorates.<sup>294</sup> In the main, correlations maintain the pattern of Labour positively associated with manual workers and Nationalists positively associated with farmers. Three of the correlations with Labour meet the threshold for statistical significance of .05, or one-in-20 (there is just a one-in-20 chance that the results have been produced by chance)—implying statistical reliability—except in the case of white collars, who for the first time have a negative correlation with Labour. However, the significance level is so high as to reject the suggested association—in any case a very low level of association—and a third set of correlations will reaffirm white collars' overall positive association with Labour voting.

On the other hand, the correlations with Nationalist voting all fail by wide margins to meet the .05 test, but this says more about correlating a set of 10 cases than it does about real world associations contained in those cases. The best that can be said for the 10-electorate correlation exercise is that it offers some support for results achieved elsewhere using more statistically rigorous measures. One such measure, set out in table 5–3,

<sup>294</sup> Ten cases constitute 25.6 percent of the electorates that have more rural than urban dwellers.

drives a third possible set of correlations where the procedure uses 505 cases—the data of the 505 polling places of the database correlated as one group.

Table 15–3 presents coefficients obtained when correlating data from all 505 polling places of the 10-electorate database. Challenging the historiography, the results confirm the direction of association between occupational categories and party voting seen in all 10 test cases. Given individual electorate results, table 15–3 results come as no surprise. Nevertheless, the table is included for the sake of completeness. Farmers correlate more weakly with Nationalist voting than manuals do with Labour voting, supporting the repeated finding that farmers were generally more inclined than manuals to vote for other parties in 1935.

**Table 15–3: Polling Place Correlations between Proportions of Four Male Occupational Categories and Proportions of Labour and Nationalist Votes, 10 Rural Electorates 1935 (N = 505)**

		<i>Farmer</i>	<i>Farm worker</i>	<i>Manual</i>	<i>White-collar</i>
Labour	Correlation	– .41**	– .23**	.50**	.10*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.026
Nationalist	Correlation	.27**	.15**	– .29**	– .15**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.001	.000	.001

\* Correlation is significant at the .05 level (2-tailed).<sup>295</sup>

\*\* Correlation is significant at the .01 level (2-tailed).

However, white-collar correlations prove the weakest: a strong indication that white-collars, as a category, were the most likely to vote for candidates other than the general white-collar preference. In turn, farm workers' correlations were usually weaker than were those of farmers.

### *Population changes*

Changes to the occupational profiles of these rural electorates feature during the depression. It is, therefore, surprising that more has not been made in the historiography about these and perhaps other changes in the

<sup>295</sup> Although the significance level is not required by the data—there are no sample data since all polling places are included—it is shown so that comparisons may be made with table Appendix C.

population in this period. Some evidence has been taken to mean that electorate populations did not change much in this period: for example, immigration had been curtailed from the mid-1920s and birth rates were low during the depression. Nevertheless, national population statistics are no guide to changes within individual electorates (particularly rural electorates) during the 10-year period. Nationally, the population increased by 10.9 percent between 1926 and 1936; but the largest regional gains were in Auckland (up by 14.9 percent), in Northland, in Waikato, and in Bay of Plenty—areas represented by all but one of the test case electorates.

The lack of a census in 1931 means that net population changes during the 10-year period between the census years of 1926 and 1936 have disguised shorter-term fluctuations. Ironically, absence of census data assisted this study because electoral boundaries were not redrawn in 1932, as would otherwise have occurred. In any case, this is an electoral study requiring electorate-based data and rolls were updated for each election irrespective of any census. Between 1928 and 1935, electoral rolls of the 10 test cases increased by an average 12.4 percent; increases ranged from minus 3.5 percent in Waimarino to plus 27.2 percent in Tauranga.

Most of the intercensal increase occurred between 1931 and 1935, when the 10 electoral rolls increased by a mean 9.0 percent, with a range of –5.0 percent in Waimarino, to + 21.0 percent in Tauranga.<sup>296</sup> Higher voter turnout bears directly on the 1935 election: the mean increase in votes cast in the 10 test cases was 20 percent, with a range of 6.2 percent to 38.4 percent. It is curious that such large increases have gone unremarked by historians.

Finally, this section highlights a defining characteristic of the 1935 election: new male entries to the rolls—assessed by the difference in occupational profile between the main and supplementary rolls—overwhelmingly favoured manuals over farmers. Although Tauranga and Waikato's new manual roll entries were only slightly more numerous than new farmer roll entries, five of the seven other Labour electorates gained at least twice as many manuals as they did farmers; Raglan gained three times as many; Bay of Plenty gained four times as many manuals as farmers.

Numbers of additional white-collars sometimes came close to matching those of farmers, and compounded the advantage to the Labour party of these population movements. As a corollary, Egmont was again exceptional. The electorate that rejected Labour was also the only electorate in this study where more farmers than manuals were entered on the supplementary rolls.

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<sup>296</sup> Comparison between census and electoral roll increases for the 10 cases is found in Appendix C.

Population movement has seldom featured in explanations of Labour's meteoric rise in 1935. Despite the election being preceded by a depression infamous for work camps in rural areas, despite anecdotal evidence of urban unemployment sending people back to the family farm, despite the 1936 census data that showed dramatic changes over the preceding decade<sup>297</sup> (and, in particular, over the preceding five years), and finally, despite very large increases in rural electoral roll numbers, historians have been mute on population changes and changes to electoral rolls—the very basis of elections. The reality was vote increases that averaged 28 percent across the nine Labour-voting cases in this study; Tauranga's votes, as noted, increased by 38 percent in four years.

Table 15–4 ranks the 10 electorates by Labour vote margins. Some anomalies appear.

**Table 15–4: Vote Margins, Manual-to-Farmer Ratios and Third-Party Votes, 10 Rural Electorates 1935**

	<i>Waimarino</i>	<i>Raglan</i>	<i>Thames</i>	<i>Waikato</i>	<i>Bay of Pl.</i>
Labour Vote	4 945	5 148	4 707	4 528	3 519
Labour Margin	1 863	1 695	1 262	784	555
Margin (percent)	22.7	18.3	11.6	8.1	6.8
Total 3rd party (percent)	2.5	7.3	2.2	20.1	20.6
Manual:Farmer Ratio	57:20	39:40	54:22	28:44	33:30
	<i>Hauraki</i>	<i>Marsden</i>	<i>Tauranga</i>	<i>Manawatu</i>	<i>Egmont</i>
Labour Vote	5 325	5 215	3 602	2 958	2 410
Labour Margin	544	347	35	29	–2 961
Margin (percent)	4.6	3.2	0.3	0.3	–39.0
Total 3rd party (percent)	13.9	7.1	30.2	30.3	N/A
Manual:Farmer Ratio	39:32	38:35	30:39	38:36	24:47

<sup>297</sup> Hauraki, as noted above, recorded an intercensal increase of 33.7 percent.

Although Waimarino and Raglan have similar vote margins in favour of Labour, Waimarino has three times more manuals than farmers, whereas Raglan has slightly fewer manuals than farmers. Thames is comparable with Waimarino in its manual to farmer ratio, except that Thames's percent vote margin is about half. Waikato, Bay of Plenty, Hauraki, and Marsden have comparable vote margins for Labour, but the latter three have more manuals than farmers against Waikato's 50 percent more farmers than manuals. Tauranga and Manawatu have similar vote margins but very different manual-farmer ratios. So far, the 10 cases remind us that the Labour party did best where farmer proportions were lowest, challenging the historiography. To explain electoral behaviour in more depth, we turn to the minor party vote.

### *Minor party voting*

As we have seen, minor party voting was often substantial. It reached double figures in five cases: in two electorates—Manawatu and Tauranga—the combined minor party vote exceeded 30 percent; in two other electorates—Waikato and Bay of Plenty—minor party voting exceeded 20 percent; in two cases the third party was an Independent candidate; in two cases the third party was Country; and in five cases the third party was Democrat. Although historians singled out Democrats—perhaps due to their overall 7.8 percent vote—the largest third-party vote in a single electorate in this study went to the Country party.

The main claim—detailed in chapter 2—is that minor parties in 1935 were essentially alternative conservative parties; their votes, therefore, came at the expense of the Nationalists, the mainstream conservative party. This study generally supports that contention. When minor parties entered the contest, Labour was better able than Nationalists were to maintain its 1931 vote. Country party candidates in the test cases were generally stronger in rural areas than Democrat candidates were. Moreover, Country party votes in rural areas sometimes eclipsed both mainstream parties, Nationalists and Labour. For their part, Democrat votes were distributed characteristically more evenly across the electorates' rural-urban continuum than were other parties' votes.

The strength of the correlations involving farmers and manuals does not consistently appear to reflect minor party voting effects. We would expect to see weakened correlations with major parties where minor voting was strong, as was the case in Bay of Plenty and Tauranga electorates. Manawatu also has weak correlations but its minor party vote was just above the mean of the nine electorates that had three or more parties. Waimarino and Marsden, on the other hand, had correlations below the median as well as low minor party voting. Finally, Thames and Raglan had high correlations but low minor party voting, while Waikato and Hauraki had high correlations with middling minor party voting.



Democrats contested eight of the 10 electorates, but were the third party in only five cases. Country party candidates contested only two electorates but defeated Democrat candidates on both occasions. In two cases an Independent came third, and in only one case the Independent polled higher than Labour. There were sufficient permutations of the minor party vote to test the orthodoxy thoroughly.

## **Summaries of the 10 test cases**

### **Bay of Plenty**

The first feature is the combination of two phenomena: an influx of several hundred manuals during the depression and a large contingent of existing white-collar workers. These factors enabled the Labour-voting alignment to predominate, and was a necessary condition for Labour's success in this electorate. A second feature is the Democrats' win over Nationalists across the 16 manual-dominated polling places. The data suggest that manuals and white-collars furnished these Democrat votes. Although the margin was only three votes, it illustrates the occasional third party forays in these rural electorates. The Labour and Democrat parties dominated the larger, generally more urban, polling places where both parties polled higher than their electorate rate. This cost Nationalists the election, as they were unable to make up the difference in the remaining smaller polling places. Although Labour had the advantage of more aligned voters, in this case they lent significant support to the Democrat candidate.

### **Hauraki**

Labour took the seat with a middling plurality, and improved on its 1931 vote despite the addition of a Democrat candidate who polled above the third party mean. The urban area of Otahuhu was Labour's salvation, with a 1246-vote advantage for Labour over Nationalist. Nationalist votes fell by a massive 23.9 percentage points compared with 1931—largely to the Democrat. Nationalists polled well in the rural areas but could not make up losses at the larger polling places. Hauraki featured a manual–white-collar alignment that exceeded 61 percent, but the Labour vote reached less than 45 percent. Nationalists and Democrats were the beneficiaries of divided loyalties on the part of Labour's erstwhile supporters, although some Nationalist supporters in urban areas voted Democrat.

### Manawatu

This electorate has a number of features in common with Tauranga: a similar level of Nationalist voting, an equally microscopic vote margin (29 votes), and incursions by several strong-polling minor parties. The difference was that Manawatu's urban areas went to Labour. With the exception of two polling places drawn with the Nationalists, Labour won only eight polling places in all and had very little impact on rural areas outside towns and townships. Nationalist votes were approximately half what the Coalition's vote had been in 1931, while the Labour vote hardly changed: in this sense, the 1935 election result was Nationalists' loss rather than Labour's win. Special votes<sup>298</sup> proved crucial to the election outcome: Labour's share of special votes was similar to its overall vote share, but Nationalists lost several percentage points. Labour won primarily because its manual workers had increased during the depression to the extent that in 1935 they narrowly outnumbered farmers.

### Marsden

This was a close contest in 1935, in which the Labour party had its usual difficulties with farmers in the more rural parts of this electorate. Labour took its customary, and in this case crucial, lead in the urban areas—Labour's vote in Whangarei was pivotal to its success. In a sense, Nationalists did well because their 45 percent vote was derived largely from an aggregated farmer–farm worker 41 percent, and particularly because some of its aligned voters supported the Democratic party in urban areas and the Country party in rural areas. Conversely, the Labour party could manage only 48 percent of the vote although its power base of manuals and white-collars comprised 60 percent of male electors. Cross-party voting took place in both camps—Labour and Nationalist voters—but Labour was clearly the net loser.

### Raglan

The 'special country' electorate of Raglan may have had the second-largest majority of these 10 cases, but its most exceptional feature was that farmer and farm worker votes topped up the Labour party vote. Almost as striking is a relatively strong correlation<sup>299</sup> between farmers and Democrat voting, although total Democrat votes were well below the third-party median of the 10 cases. Nationalists' normally supportive farmers and farm workers comprised a bare majority, but a majority nonetheless. The Nationalist vote, however, was a paltry 37.4 percent, against Labour's 55.5 percent. Labour-aligned voters, who included a staunch contingent of miners, were less inclined to vote for Democrats than farmers.

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<sup>298</sup> These 415 votes (4.9 percent of the electorate total) were 'Absent, declaration, postal, and seamen's votes'.

<sup>299</sup> The .36 correlation coefficient is 'relatively strong' because it constituted farmers strongest positive association with a minor party.

## **Tauranga**

The relativity of Tauranga's farmer and manual worker numbers altered in favour of manuals during the depression. Nevertheless, farmers and farm workers (49.6 percent) virtually matched manuals and white-collars (50.4 percent), but the Nationalist vote was a meagre 35 percent. Each of three minor parties exceeded Labour's slender 35-vote margin. Here, minor parties took more than 30 percent of the votes, more to the cost of Nationalists. In particular, farmers' votes were split by the Country party, which won more than one-third of all polling places and took just over one-fifth of the electorate vote.

## **Thames**

Manual numbers exceeded farmer numbers in this electorate, without including Chapman's miners upon whom he appears to have based his claim that Thames was a 'special country' electorate. This constituency boasted two and a half times more manuals than it did farmers, and minimal third-party votes to account for. The conservative Independent candidate, however, managed 43 percent of the vote, although farmers and farm workers aggregated to just under 27 percent. In fact, the aggregate percentage of farmers, farm workers, and white-collar workers was just over 46 percent, nearly 11 percentage points below Labour's vote share. Clearly, numbers of manuals—particularly in urban areas—voting Independent were larger than numbers of farmers voting Labour.

## **Waikato**

This is one of two cases in this study where manuals and white-collars aggregated to a smaller percentage than the Labour vote, implying that farmers and / or farm workers also voted Labour. Nationalists did relatively better in urban polling places because of strong voting for Country and Democratic parties in rural areas. The two minor parties took over 20 percent of the vote: voting for one minor party exceeded Labour's margin by 50 percent; voting for the other fell short of the margin by less than one percentage point. In more cases than not, third-party voting correlated positively with farmers and negatively with manuals, suggesting that farmers gave more votes to third parties than did manuals. The Waikato result was a product of Labour voter loyalty and strong minor parties who split the non-Labour vote.

## Waimarino

Waimarino was a comprehensive Labour party victory, one of just two rural electorates in this study where Labour won an outright majority of the vote, as well as virtually two-thirds of the polling places.

Waimarino's manual and white-collar aggregation of 62 percent of male electors closely matched Labour's 60.1 percent of the vote, and Labour's vote margin of 22.7 percentage points was its largest margin in the 10 cases. Minor party voting was insignificant, however, and Labour-aligned voters dominated right across the electorate. Farmers were outnumbered by manuals by more than three to one in the group of larger polling places; by more than seven to one in Taumaranui (the largest urban area); and by nearly three to one across the electorate; even by almost two to one in the group of smaller, generally more rural, polling places.

## Egmont

Egmont was exceptional: when other rural electorates returned a Labour candidate for the first time, or increased his majority, Egmont extended its conservative incumbent's vote. Despite the overwhelming vote margin, however, correlations were unexceptional in strength (apart from white collars who showed a noticeably higher than median correlation with Labour). This was one of only two electorates in this study where farmer numbers exceeded manual numbers in urban areas, but Egmont's farmer–farm worker aggregation was nine percentage points smaller than the Independent vote. Manuals, whose correlation with Labour was only moderate, were the only possible source of the balance of the Independent vote. Egmont serves notice of often-underestimated conservative voting by manual workers.

## Summary of research hypothesis findings

*Hypothesis 1: a majority of farmers voted Labour (strong version); alternatively, Labour won because sufficient farmers combined with other voters (weak version).*

None of the test cases supports the strong version. Firstly, no test case had a majority of farmers in its complement of male electors, so one cannot infer farmers' behaviour from an electorate decision. The weak version takes as a starting point the implication that farmers (in concert with farm workers) were sufficiently

numerous to account for Nationalist votes as well as a shortfall in Labour voting (reckoned to be the difference between the combined proportion of manual and white-collar workers and the Labour vote proportion). A shortfall occurred in just two electorates: Waikato and Raglan.<sup>300</sup> As a starting point then, the weak version is necessarily correct in two cases.

*Hypothesis 2: farm workers voted Labour.*

No systematic evidence in these 10 cases links farm workers to Labour voting. Correlations between the two are consistently negative. Farm workers generally aligned in their choices with farmers.

*Hypothesis 3: white-collar workers voted Labour.*

White-collar workers aligned with Labour voting, and therefore aligned with manual workers. Farm workers' correlations were usually weaker than manuals', but maintained the same direction of voting.

*Hypothesis 4: minor parties took votes disproportionately from the Nationalists.*

Minor party voters did not necessarily come from the ranks of erstwhile Nationalist voters, but evidence suggests that Labour would have lost more 2-way contests. Labour was fortunate that minor parties entered the election in such numbers. Minor party voting featured in seven of the case studies; but arguably, the effects of minor party voting were less dramatic than cross-party voting by major parties.

*Hypothesis 5: changes in rural electorates' occupational profiles during the depression favoured the Labour party.*

All nine Labour-voting electorates had more manuals or white-collars than farmers or farm workers added to the roll by way of the supplementary roll. In five cases, the additional manuals alone changed manuals' relativity with farmers so that manuals became more numerous than farmers.

*Hypothesis 6: higher voter turnout benefited Labour in 1935.*

The claim is not testable directly because increased votes came from two sources: increases in registered electors and increased numbers of registered electors going to the polls. The data would only reveal how many votes were due to increased turnout if electoral registrations were static, not highly fluid as was the case in 1935. Nevertheless, measuring increases in votes at both Labour and Nationalist-won polling places provides a qualified answer.

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<sup>300</sup> There is room for additional Labour voting by farmers or farm workers, according to the extent that manuals or white-collar workers eschew Labour and vote for another party. There is little systematic evidence of this.

### Final remarks

The 1935 general election has featured in New Zealand historiography because Labour came to power for the first time following a severe economic depression, and because many rural electorates voted Labour for the first time. Substantial historiographical weight supports an orthodox explanation for Labour's meteoric rise to power in 1935. The widespread view has been that farmers voted for the Labour party in a substantial voter realignment, marking 1935 as a 'critical' election, comparable with electoral upheavals in other countries in this period.

This thesis has argued that most historians have misunderstood the nature of 'rural' electorates. The biggest surprise is that a cursory glance at an electoral roll for any one of the so-called rural electorates in 1935 would have revealed relatively small proportion of farmers. It is outside the scope of the thesis to try to explain these oversights, except for a few passing remarks.

Firstly, proponents of the 'Liberal alliance' theory were high profile members of a relatively small historical community. Perhaps the popularity of their views reflects their stature. Chapter 2 Historiography attempted to explain links between prominent historians and the corpus of work forming the orthodox explanation for the 1935 election result.

Secondly, New Zealand historiography, especially biography, has to some extent favoured the political left—at least, in this writer's opinion. The notion that even farmers would form a voting alignment with blue-collar workers appears to have had particular appeal to some analysts.<sup>301</sup>

Thirdly, farmers were the 'backbone of the country', and the long-standing country quota strengthened their hegemony. 'Rural' was equated with 'farming', so when rural electorates uncharacteristically voted for the Labour party, farmers must have been responsible.

A fourth possibility is arguably more controversial: the New Zealand *mentalité* seems to incorporate a belief that we do things better here. For example, boosterism in colonial times, coupled with the 'social laboratory of the world' self-promotion of W. P. Reeves and the Liberals, together with the high profile of the welfare state, may have contributed to a sort of insular smugness by New Zealanders: when times were bad enough in this country, even farmers voted for the political left.

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<sup>301</sup> Willis Airey, for example, see Chapter 2.

However one might seek to explain why previous analyses overlooked readily available sources, this thesis subjected those sources to new, albeit conventional, questions and measured several key indicators for the first time. The first measure is the actual proportion of four male occupational categories on the electoral roll at polling place-level. This analysis also revealed that urban centres of these rural electorates contained high concentrations of voters in Labour-aligned occupations. In every Labour-won electorate in this study, these votes were crucial.

The second measure is the statistical correlation at polling place-level between male occupational categories and party voting. This showed how increasing proportions of farmers and farm workers in rural areas were consistently associated with higher proportions of Nationalist, not Labour, voting. Statistical correlation also revealed patterns to minor-party voting not previously identified. Minor parties took votes from both of the major parties, not simply from erstwhile conservative voters as claimed in the historiography.

A third measure comprised electoral roll analysis that highlighted changes to male occupational category profiles in these rural electorates, particularly during the depression. Numbers in occupations that correlated positively with Labour voting increased faster than did Nationalist-voting occupations. On occasion, numbers of the manual–white-collar voting alignment overtook the farmer–farm worker voting alignment. The additional electoral roll numbers were substantial—up by one-third or more in many cases—but for some reason have been largely ignored by analysts.

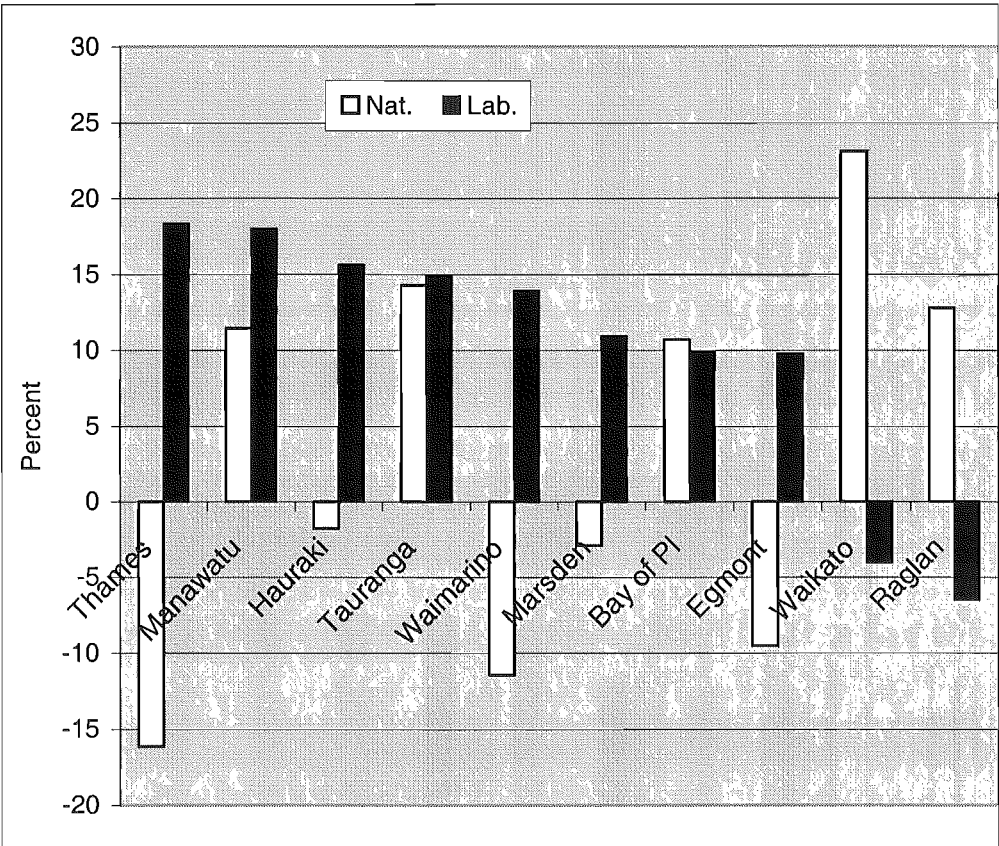
In view of the lack of a census in 1931, reliance on census data would not have revealed dynamics occurring during the period of the depression. Appendix C: Comparison between Percentage Changes in Census Numbers 1926–1936 and Percentage Changes in Electoral Roll Numbers 1928–1935, 10 Rural Electorates will underscore this. Generally, there is little correlation between the two measures, and the data show some large movements in 1931 and 1935 electoral roll numbers before the census belatedly reflected the changes in 1936.

In any case, the effect of additional roll numbers was compounded by static electoral boundaries across three general elections. Rural electorate boundaries would have looked very different had a 1931 census seen boundaries redrawn. The size of the effect is debatable, but this study showed that new boundaries in one rural electorate in 1938 saw a shift in favour of the farmer–farm worker voting alignment.

A fourth measure—change in voter turnout—found evidence to support claims that higher turnout sees a rise in Labour’s vote share. The 1935 election had an unusually high turnout, another aspect largely ignored by historians, where polling places with large voting increases generally voted Labour.

Finally, we turn again to the complexities of cross-party voting. Often seen only in terms of farmers voting Labour, cross-party voting was also a feature of manual and white-collar voting in these rural electorates in 1935. Figure 15–2 plots the 10 electorates by differences between the aggregate of aligned occupational categories less the relevant party vote. There are two caveats that we will return to presently.

**Figure 15–2: Percentage Point Difference between Labour Vote and Aggregate of Manuals and White-collars, and Percentage Point Difference between Nationalist Vote\* and Aggregate of Farmers and Farm workers, 10 Rural Electorates 1935**



\*Thames and Egmont had conservative Independent candidates in primary opposition to Labour.

Firstly, consider the part of the plot above the zero percent line. Thames electorate had a 55 percent Labour vote from an aggregate manual–white-collar alignment of 74 percent. The black bar records the difference of



some 18-19 percentage points—a ‘Labour deficit’, which was support for the conservative Independent (the third-party vote was miniscule in Thames).

On the other hand, the white bar for Thames indicates a ‘conservative deficit’: the conservative vote fell short of the aggregate of farmers and farm workers by some 17 percentage points. A white bar on the negative side indicates the extent to which the conservatives picked up manual–white-collar votes. In Thames, therefore, Labour suffered slightly more from defections by its aligned categories (manuals and white-collars) than did the conservatives.

By extension, five of the electorate cases suggest that conservatives picked up manual–white-collar votes: Thames, Hauraki, Waimarino, Marsden, and Egmont. Conversely, only in two cases (Waikato and Raglan) did Labour make up its vote outside the manual worker alignment. Figure 15–2 offers evidence that cross-party voting hindered Labour more than it did the conservatives.

The two caveats mentioned are that the plot takes account only of net shifts, and that no allowance is made for third-party votes. Firstly, gross shifts occur when cross-party voting occurs in more than one direction. Net shifts are the product of gross shifts. Consequently, net shifts may suggest that cross-party voting occurred in only one direction, but that is because gross shifts are obscured. Available data do not permit a closer view.

Secondly, minor-party voting featured in several electorates but the plot takes no account of it. Manawatu, Tauranga, Bay of Plenty, and Waikato were loci of sizeable minor-party votes. Nevertheless, the aim has been to find a way to judge whether, on balance, Labour or Nationalists were more badly affected by minor party votes; contrary to the historiography, figure 15–2 suggests the former.

Ironically, voters who lurched towards the left in 1935 seem to have been manual workers who had voted conservatively in previous elections, but then swung to Labour after the 1930s depression. That is probably why attention to home ownership assistance was so fruitful for the conservatives—it appealed to large numbers of voters who were outside the ambit of policies that centred on farmers and businessmen.

Analysts have feted the Labour party for renewing the ‘Liberal alliance’ by capturing farmers’ votes. The historiography makes very little mention of Labour’s manual worker support, suggesting that it was assumed to have gone to Labour. Nor does the historiography identify social change to help explain the election result. This thesis suggests four alternative findings.

Firstly, farmers generally stayed conservative voters; therefore, 1935 was not a critical election in terms of voter realignment. Secondly, manual workers who voted for the right appear to have outnumbered farmers who voted for the left—not in every electorate, admittedly, but certainly across the 10 case studies as a whole. Thirdly, many manual workers turned out for Labour for the first time in 1935, an electoral phenomenon previously identified in urban areas but not in rural ones. The fourth point—considered pre-eminent—adds a structural dimension. In 1935, rural electorates, at least as far as these cases are concerned, had urban concentrations of voters whose numbers swelled during the depression of the 1930s. These were the electors most galvanised into action by the depression. The 1935 election result endorses the Labour party's reputation—for most of its history, but particularly in the 1920s and 1930s—as a primarily urban and manual worker party. The first Labour government was notable in many respects, but its achievements did not extend to an historic harvest of farmers' votes.

## Afterword

Dr Johnson: 'That, Sir, is the good of counting. It brings everything to a certainty, which before floated in the mind indefinitely.'

—James Boswell, *Life of Johnson*, entry for 18 April 1783.

## Appendix A: Notes on statistical methods

Despite popular perception, statistics is an inexact science with assumptions, approximations, and long-standing controversies. This appendix covers two statistical issues relevant to this thesis. The first issue concerns the particular correlation technique used in this thesis. The second issue considers the controversy surrounding the theory of statistical significance.

In quantitative studies, the choice of a particular algorithm should be based on protocols that relate to the data set in question, and any assumptions need to be explicit.<sup>302</sup> The overarching principle here is the Rule of Parsimony: other things being equal, simple models are preferable to complicated ones. The model should use the smallest number of parameters that will adequately represent the pattern in the data.

In this thesis, the data mandated using Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficient.<sup>303</sup> The task was to determine the intensity and direction of a possible association between two variables measured as percentages: party vote and occupation.<sup>304</sup> Data protocols for Pearson correlations are symmetric, continuous, ratio-scale variables expected to contain many different values.<sup>305</sup>

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<sup>302</sup> For the importance of theory in data analysis, see John Irvine, Ian Miles, and Jeff Evans, *Demystifying Social Statistics*, (Pluto Press, London, 1979), p. 265. Also, Hanan C. Selvin and Alan Stuart, 'Data-Dredging Procedures in Survey Analysis', *The American Statistician*, Vol. 20, No. 3 (June, 1966), pp. 20–23. *Data-fitting* is the fitting of functions to data with no reference to theory: see, for example, Alexander von Eye and Christof Schuster, *Regression Analysis for Social Sciences*, (Academic Press, San Diego, 1998), p. 90.

<sup>303</sup> See, for example, W. H. Foddy, *Elementary Applied Statistics for the Social Sciences*, (Harper and Row, Sydney, 1988), p. 139, for a general discussion of the Pearson correlation coefficient. A common measure of correlation is Spearman's  $r$ , essentially Pearson's  $r$  computed on ranks of data. Spearman's  $r$  has the advantage of being a *non-parametric* test. According to Larry E. Toothaker, *Introductory Statistics for the Behavioural Sciences*, (McGraw-Hill, New York, 1986), p. 550, Spearman is also sensitive to a 'broader spectrum of relationships'. In the present case, however, Pearson is used because it preserves the shades of difference between data points that is lost when data are converted to ranks.

<sup>304</sup> If an increase in one variable is associated with an increase in the other variable they are said to be positively correlated. If one variable tends to increase as the other tends to decrease they are negatively (inversely) correlated.

This thesis makes limited use of partial correlations. Partial correlations describe the linear relationship between two variables while controlling for the effects of one or more additional variables. In other words, the partial correlation is that remaining between two variables after removing the correlation that is due to their mutual association with the other variables.<sup>306</sup> The control used was minor party voting, in an attempt to reveal which of the mainstream parties was more affected by minor party votes.

Pearson's correlation coefficient is only sensitive to linear relationships assessed in this thesis by bubble charts, a type of scatter graph.<sup>307</sup> The data should be bivariate normal, meaning that both variables contain data whose distribution approximates a 'normal', or Gaussian curve, in order that generalizations can be made from the sample to the whole population (generally unknown) from which it is drawn. Data that are not normally distributed are *skewed*.

Two problems arise with skewed data. The first is that such data will depress the values of the correlation coefficients.<sup>308</sup> That is simply to say, however, that coefficients obtained should be regarded as minimum values, not that the use of Pearson's algorithm is rendered invalid. The second problem of skew turns on the question of sample data. Pearson's correlation coefficient is called Pearson's *r* when dealing with *samples* of data, its usual application. When dealing with *populations* of data, such as the data in this thesis, the algorithm is called Pearson's  $\rho$  (the Greek letter *rho*)<sup>309</sup>. It follows that *r* is the sample estimate of *rho*.<sup>310</sup>

Populations are considered to have normal distributions, and sample data must have a normal distribution so that results from the sample meaningfully extrapolate to the population from which they were drawn.<sup>311</sup> The

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<sup>305</sup> 'Continuous' means relatively many values are anticipated on both variables. 'Ratio-scale' means an interval measurement that has a true zero point: Eleanor W. Willemsen, *Understanding Statistical Reasoning: How to Evaluate Research Literature in the Behavioural Sciences*, (W.H. Freeman, San Francisco, 1974), p. 82.

<sup>306</sup> SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) for Windows V11.0.

<sup>307</sup> Eleanor W. Willemsen, *Understanding Statistical Reasoning*, p. 76. Data are linear when a straight 'line of best fit' can be applied to them.

<sup>308</sup> Foddy, '*Elementary Applied Statistics*', p. 148.

<sup>309</sup> As noted in the Methodology chapter, this thesis uses the word '*rho*' instead of the Greek letter to avoid confusion between  $\rho$  (rho) and *p* or *p* denoting *probability*.

<sup>310</sup> Toothaker, *Introductory Statistics*, pp. 176–177.

<sup>311</sup> Measures of statistical significance such as the so-called probability or p-value, are intended to assess the confidence we can have that a research sample accurately reflects the population from which it is drawn. By definition, such measures are not required when the data are the whole population: Foddy, '*Elementary Applied Statistics*', p. 159. Note that *statistical probability* is often confused with *probably true*.

data of this thesis are not sample data. All the males on an electoral roll constitute a population and, apart from a few exceptions noted in the text, all are included in the analysis. The results are population *parameters*, not sample *statistics*; they do not represent the population, they *are* the population. The values of the data are the values of the actual population. In any case, the Central Limit Theorem states that samples containing more than 30 instances are considered bivariate normal.<sup>312</sup> In the rural electorates of this study, the minimum number of polling places exceeds 30; their mean exceeds 50.

Finally, Pearson's correlation coefficient does not indicate quantitative change of one variable relative to another variable, nor does it imply a cause-and-effect relationship or interdependence between variables.<sup>313</sup> Dependence of one variable on other is implied by the techniques of regression analysis. Even in cases of high values of  $r$ , no causal relationship is implied because both variables could be influenced by a third variable.<sup>314</sup> Extreme scores on either or both variables can influence the value of  $r$ , even to the point of changing a direct relationship into an inverse one.<sup>315</sup>

The second issue—the theory of statistical significance—is the subject of a long-standing controversy in statistics. The term *statistical significance* was 'coined to mean strictly only that the sample data "signify", in the sense that they *indicate*, the existence of a difference in the population(s) sampled.'<sup>316</sup> Statistical significance tests are carried out routinely and their results reported as a matter of convention. This section traverses some of the rationale behind the theory and opposition to it.

<sup>312</sup> Foddy, p. 100.

<sup>313</sup> Zar, *Biostatistical Analysis*, pp. 371–373. In contrast, dependence of one variable on other is implied by the techniques of *regression analysis*.

<sup>314</sup> Toothaker, *Introductory Statistics*, p. 186.

<sup>315</sup> Toothaker, *Introductory Statistics*, pp. 184–5.

<sup>316</sup> Atkins and Jarrett, 'The Significance of "Significance Tests"', in Irvine, *et al* (eds), pp. 87–88. See also Denton E. Morrison and Ramon E. Henkel (eds), *The Significance Test Controversy*, (Aldine Publishing Company, Chicago, 1970), *passim*, for a history and critique of significance tests. Despite the terminology, statistical significance has nothing to do with *substantive* significance: Toothaker, *Introductory Statistics*, p. 325–7, and Denton E. Morrison and Henkel (eds), *Significance Test Controversy*, p. 30. For a claim that confidence intervals have never been validated, see Gary King, *A Solution to the Ecological Inference Problem: Reconstructing Individual Behaviour From Aggregate Data*, (Princeton University Press, New Jersey, 1997), p. 7. James K. Skipper Jr., Anthony L. Guenther, and Gilbert Nass, 'The Sacredness of .05: A Note Concerning the Uses of Statistical Levels of Significance in Social Science', in Morrison and Henkel (eds), p. 157, argue that *power* considerations have been under-utilised because of the emphasis on significance tests. David Gold, 'Statistical Tests and Substantive Significance' in Morrison and Henkel (eds), p. 175, describes a significance test as an attempt to fit observed data to a model.

Most quantitative studies use inferential statistical methods to derive general conclusions about populations from samples drawn from the population.<sup>317</sup> As noted above, a sample must be representative of its parent population, so that conclusions about the sample can be validly applied to that population. A statistical measure of the representativeness of the data is called a significance test.

Nonetheless, significance levels are reported on data that has not been produced by random sampling, and therefore, cannot be regarded as representative:

[I]n the social sciences, tests of significance are commonly applied to data which have not been randomly selected from any real population. The use of statistical inference then rests merely on hopes that the data can be regarded *as if* they had been obtained from a random sample drawn from some defined population.<sup>318</sup>

When Pearson's  $r$  is associated with sample statistics, a measure of reliability is required. This gauges our confidence that the result obtained is not due to chance. In other words, when one sample is drawn from a population, researchers need to be able to confidently state that other samples drawn from the same population are likely to produce a similar result. The measure of confidence, or confidence interval, is called the measure of significance and has a specific test, usually reported in the form  $p = .01$  or  $p = .001$  ( $p$  stands for probability).

Significance tests, therefore, are '...rules for deciding when sample results are inconsistent with a hypothesis about the populations.'<sup>319</sup> A population survey does not therefore require a significance test, because significance testing aims to establish '...the confidence we can have that a research sample does accurately reflect the population from which it is drawn... [therefore it] does not apply for the whole population.'<sup>320</sup> It is axiomatic that significance testing only has relevance to samples of data, since confidence levels are generated using the characteristics of a 'normal' distribution, a theoretical construct that is only needed when we need to assess whether samples of data are in fact randomly drawn from the relevant (but usually

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<sup>317</sup> The measured attributes of samples of data are *statistics*. The measured attributes of populations of data are *parameters*. Every individual governed by the hypothesis in question constitutes a *population*—all the males on the electoral roll, in the present case.

<sup>318</sup> Atkins and Jarrett, "The Significance of "Significance Tests", p. 97.

<sup>319</sup> Atkins and Jarrett, "The Significance of "Significance Tests", p. 93.

<sup>320</sup> Foddy, *Elementary Applied Statistics*, p. 159.

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unknown) population.<sup>321</sup> This thesis has no sample statistics, no need to generalize to a parent population and, therefore, does not assess statistical significance.

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<sup>321</sup> Foddy, *Elementary Applied Statistics*, pp. 89, 101, and 165.

## Appendix B: List of representative occupations

Farmer	Farm wkr.	Manual	White-collar	Excluded
bee farmer	dairyman	bacon curer	accountant	gentleman
dairy farmer	farm asst.	baker	bank officer	pensioner
farm manager	farm lab.	barman	brewer	retired
farmer	farm worker	blacksmith	builder	unemployed
farming	farmhand	bodybuilder	carrier	
fruitgrower		boilermaker	chemist	
market gardener		bricklayer	civil servant	
nurseryman		bridgeman	clergyman	
orchardist		bushman	clerk	
poultry breeder		butcher	comm. traveller	
poultry farmer		cabinetmaker	confectioner	
retired farmer		caretaker	contractor	
settler		carpenter	cordial maker	
sharemilker		carter	dealer	
sheep farmer		cheesemaker	doctor	
		cook	engineer	
		coppersmith	hairdresser	
		dairy worker	head storeman	
		driver	herd tester	
		drover	instructor	
		electrician	ironmonger	
		factory worker	lawyer	
		fencer	lawyer	
		fisherman	manager	
		fitter	meter reader	
		foreman	milkman	
		gardener	minister	
		gas employee	news vendor	
		goldminer	photographer	
		greenkeeper	policeman	
		horse trainer	postman	
		labourer	proprietor	
		linesman	publican	
		mechanic	salesman	
		millwright	shop asst	
		miner	stationmaster	
		moulder	teacher	
		painter	vet	
		pastrycook		
		plumber		
		porter		

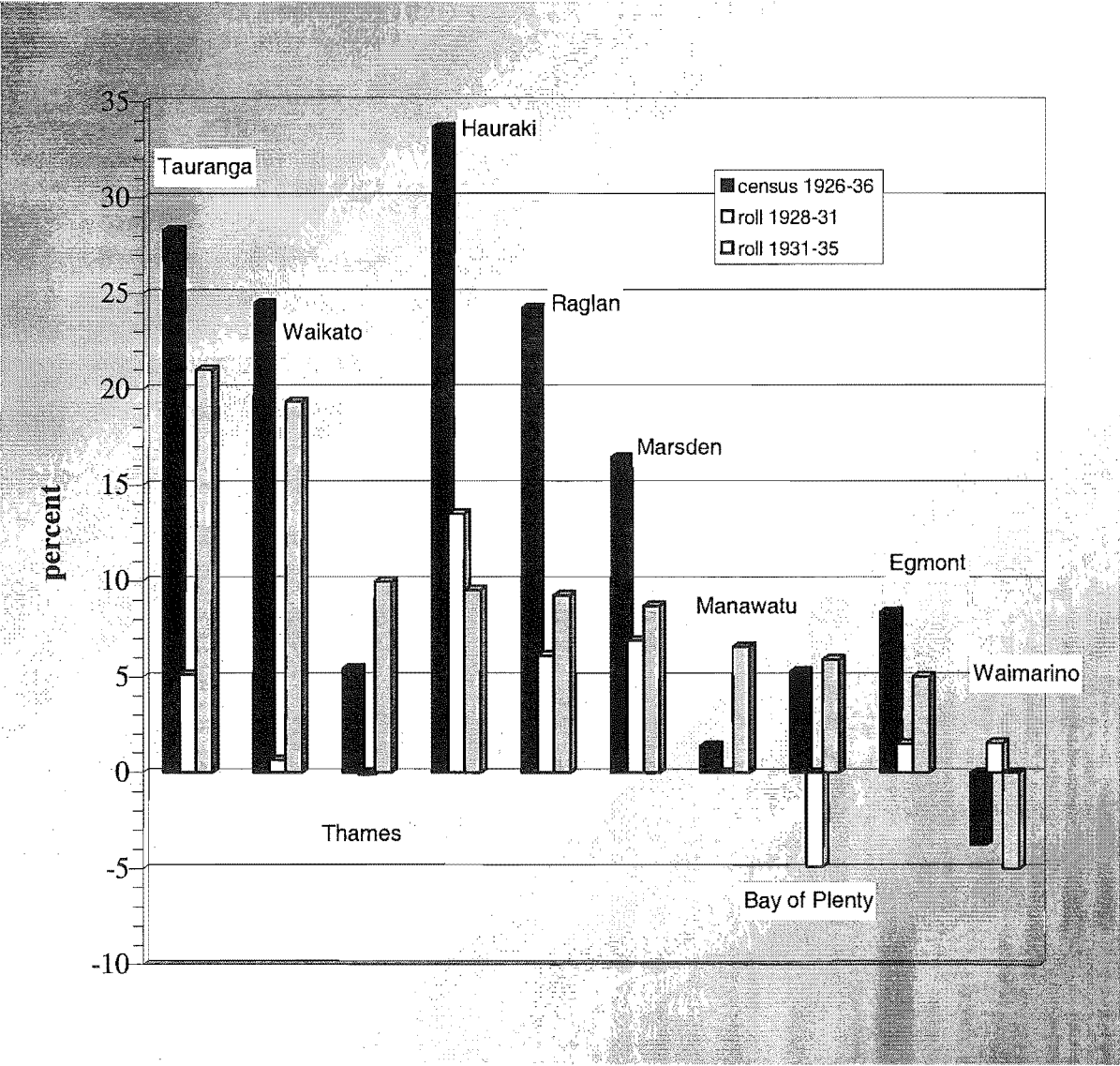


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**Manual**  
(continued)  
PWD worker  
railway worker  
relief worker  
sawmill hand  
seaman  
slaughterman  
soldier  
stonemason  
storeman  
striker  
timber worker  
train driver  
trimmer  
upholsterer  
vanman  
warehouseman  
watchman  
welder

Appendix C

Figure C-1: Comparison between Percentage Changes in Census Numbers 1926–1936, and Percentage Changes in Electoral Roll Numbers 1928–1935, 10 Rural Electorates



# Appendix D: Electoral Quota and Permissible Variations, 1881–1987

		<i>Quota</i>	<i>Electorates (European)</i>	<i>Permissible variation +/-</i>	
1987	North Is	33 217	76	1 661	
	South Is	33 178		1 659	
1967	N. Is	30 424	76	1 521	
	S. Is	30 226		1 511	
1957	N. Is	26 263	76	1 313	
	S. Is	26 220		1 311	
1952	N. Is	23 620	76	1 771	
	S. Is	23 408		1 756	
1946	N. Is	14 010	76	500	now 'adults'
	S. Is	14 180			(c. 750 tot.)
1937	--	21 936	76	1 250 250	rural urban
1927	--	19 820	76	1 250 250	rural urban
1922	--	18 131	76	1 250 250	rural* urban
1918	--	17 118	76	550 250	rural urban
1911	--	15 180	76	550 100	rural urban
1907	--	13 400	76	550 100	rural urban
1902	--	11 917	68	550 100	rural urban
1896	--	11 848	62	750 100	rural urban
1892	--	10 545	62	750 100	rural urban
1890	--	9 711	62	750 100	rural urban
1887	--	7 085	91	750	both
1881	'country'	4 903	91	N/A	
	'town'	6 537		N/A	

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